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ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

OSCAR L. JOSEPH

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ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

BY

OSCAR L. JOSEPH

AUTHOR OF "THE FAITH AND THE FELLOWSHIP,"
"PERSONAL APPEALS TO SUNDAY
SCHOOL WORKERS," ETC.

"Speak but the word! the Evangel shall awaken
Life in the lost, the hero in the slave."

Evangelism
(Sermon)

NEW YORK
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TO MY FRIEND

S. PARKES CADMAN, D.D.

A GREAT PROPHET OF GRACE AND TRUTH
WHO COMBINES
THE PASSION OF THE EVANGEL
WITH SPIRITUAL INSIGHT
AND BROAD CULTURE

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PREFACE

WE are on the threshold of most radical changes touching every phase of thought and life. New and better ideals are about to appear out of the clash of competing nations and armies. We shall soon find ourselves in a new world, when the acid test of real fitness will be searchingly applied to every institution. The severe sifting will leave only the gold of genuine worth. It will glisten with greater resplendence and be diligently sought after by earnest souls, who have survived the terrible ordeal of suffering and loss. The church will not escape this fiery trial. But I am confident that the church of Jesus Christ is competent to meet the urgent demands of the new day. Some of the ways in which this should be done is indicated in this book. It is a discussion of the dynamics of evangelism, whose purpose is to reconstruct society by changing the individual, so that his look inward in penitence, will enable him to look upward to God in confidence, and then look outward to men with enthusiasm, for the service of the kingdom of God, in the interest of worldwide democracy and fraternity.

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ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

CHAPTER ONE

THE EVANGEL

THE emphasis on spiritual things is one of the striking by-products of the war. But it is a significant fact that much of this emphasis is seen outside organised Christianity. At the outbreak of the war many turned to the churches for relief but were disappointed, and so their restless spirits went elsewhere for consolation. The popularity of spiritualism, crystal-gazing and other cults is a decided sign of the times. So far as these persons are concerned, the church failed to give a searching and satisfying message. It was moreover regarded by many as having gone into spiritual bankruptcy. This is all the more deplorable because the church was organised for the precise purpose of bringing men into fellowship with the living God and of enabling them to realise the brotherhood of all believers through Jesus Christ. We have turned away from the essential truth and have busied ourselves with side-issues. We have struggled to maintain the organisation by a series of checkmating in a

spirit of competition and suspicion, in sheer neglect of the primary aim of the church's mission. Bishop Brent, in a memorable sermon at St. Paul's, London, declared: "A large part of the public has already issued notice on the churches that unless we observe the elementary principles of peaceableness and fairness and fellowship, they will get on without us." The loss that will follow from such a separation must needs be irreparable. The time has surely come for the church to take an inventory and learn what is absolutely essential for its effective task in the all-round redemption of the individual, of society and of humanity. This investigation will surely bring enrichment.

What is the conspicuous message of the church? It is the same with which it began its militant career. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. This is not a declaration of propositions but the proclamation of a living person of exceptional power and incomparable grace. He is the *ideal* man—Jesus, who shows us the way of life and truth. He is the *chosen* man—the anointed Christ, who is ever present with us as we scale the sunlit summits to God, to enter the divine presence in the enjoyment of forgiveness. He is the *filial* man—Son of God in a unique sense, who offers us also the privilege of communion with God in the experience of sonship. He is, finally the *fraternal* man, who bears the suffering human race upon his heart and summons everyone with

the winsome invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The burden of the apostolic evangel was Jesus Christ "Strong Son of God, immortal love," who alone is capable of interpreting and supplying our divers needs. Recall some of the sentences which utter the central and recurring theme of apostle and disciple. "In none other is there salvation." "Through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "Ye were redeemed with precious blood, even the blood of Christ." "He was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin." Turn wherever you will in the New Testament and you meet with one continuous and convincing testimony that to Jesus Christ was given all the affection and devotion of the whole church. His prophetic declaration: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself," was heartily accepted without the slightest hint of dissension. Those who were drawn to him set their seal that he is the unique Saviour, while others who rejected him thereby showed their disapproval of his character of holiness, his cross

of sacrifice, his gospel of redemption and his claim of authority. In doing so, they only exposed their own inability to fathom the gracious counsels and purposes of God, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Well might Bishop Henson say: "Remove Christ from the central place and the temple of religion is not only empty but ruined." Jesus Christ is the only adequate evangel for our present day of depressing confusion, of subtle sinfulness, of heartbreaking anguish, of irreparable loss.

It is true that he laid the emphasis on the kingdom of God. But we cannot infer, as some do, that the apostles were mistaken when they substituted the King for the Kingdom. Jesus repeatedly drew the attention of his hearers to himself and compelled them to reckon with him. "Follow me"; "Come unto me"; "He that is not with me is against me"; "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"; are clear and forceful utterances which permit of only one meaning. After his disciples had sojourned with him for a season, he questioned them searchingly: "Whom say ye that I am?" If they failed to understand him and to give him the first place, there was little hope of their being able to press his claims on others and to secure their implicit submission to him. The synoptic

gospels agree with the gospel of John in this respect. Indeed, the four taken together constitute a composite portrait of Jesus, clear in its features and compelling in its appeal. The distinctive qualities of the gospels enrich the significance of their unity. Mark writes of the strength of the Servant of God; Matthew, of the sacrifice of the Anointed of God; Luke, of the sympathy of the Man of God; John, of the sublime spirituality of the Son of God. And yet these traits are not exclusive in each of the memoirs but appear in all four. The several epistles, moreover, interpret and apply the truth of the gospel records. When therefore we hear the cry, "Back to Christ," we accept it on condition that it is back to the Christ of the entire New Testament, whose testimony is consistent, without any disparity or evasion. When we think of him as the living Christ, the more appropriate summons should be "Forward to Christ," who stands at the parting of the ways and calls us to follow him and turn away from the slippery paths which slope down to hell. Hear him and find peace.

The three great words of the gospel are life, light and love. They strikingly set forth the distinctive character of God. He is *life,* even the source and fountain of it, in whom we live and move and have our being. He is *light,* who reveals himself in gracious self-communication, with whom we realise the blessedness of fellowship.

He is *love* whereby he exhibits his supreme passion in equity and benignity for the benefit of whosoever will. These sublime ideas found expression in the person of Jesus Christ, who reflected God's bright glory and was stamped with God's own character. "In Jesus the chasm between God and man has closed up; in our search for God we have at last arrived; there is no beyond to torment our tired and aching souls; no sense of a distance yet to be traversed, of a separating river yet to be crossed." So writes Principal E. Griffith-Jones in his refreshing book on "Faith and Immortality." For years Christian people have lived without any vital relationship to the future life, and many even declared that both God and immortality were of small significance. The war has shown the folly of such an attitude. Eager souls are craving for assurance concerning the destiny of their loved ones who have fallen in "No Man's Land," and at other places on the war front. How timely is the message of him who is the resurrection and the life. He tells us that since God is our Father and we have the experience of his presence now with us, the incident of death cannot violate nor destroy our relationship. Indeed, our assurance of immortality is based on the personality of Christ, who is supreme in the moral and spiritual world. His companionship with us shall never be broken by the event of death.

"God is! Christ loves! Christ lives!
And by his own returning gives
Sure pledge of immortality.
The first-fruits—He; and we—
The harvest of his victory.
The life beyond shall this life far transcend,
And death is the beginning—not the end."

The idea of God as love, so richly illuminated in the life of Jesus, makes for the large enrichment of human life. The trappings of time, the adornments of princes, the honours of governments—what are they of themselves but so many empty favours! They sit well only on those who have the character of Christlikeness, which is the first and final test of genuine worth. Jesus scandalised the aristocracy of his day because he discarded the cast-iron distinctions of society. He cared neither for the glamour of riches nor for the gloom of poverty. The outcast and the fallen both found in him a friend. His sympathy was so unusually generous, in word and deed, that various classes and nationalities were won. The Roman centurion, the Samaritans of Sychar and the Syrophenician; the publican, the Magdalene and the outcast of every type found a welcome in his healing company. In every age, the labouring man and the professional man, the Oriental and the Occidental, the pious and the impious, have been ennobled by him, who has more than fulfilled their most ardent expectations. Under the influence of Jesus, the early church received this

true view of the human race. Room was made for the slave by the side of his master. Both enjoyed equal privileges. It meant a great deal when Paul the aristocrat and Onesimus the runaway slave fraternised with each other. It was this apostle who declared in explicit terms that where Christ is supremely recognised, "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all."

The evangel teaches the love of man as man, regardless of class, caste or country. In the days of the church's romance when it honestly accepted, in scorn of consequence, the principle of a common fraternity, there was power in its midst. It wielded an influence even to the undermining of empires and the enthroning of righteousness and truth. Of course, its members were exposed to the contempt of the literati and the hostility of the élite of every nation who regarded them as "crazy and credulous fanatics and as an abomination to society." But none of these things moved them, for they had the witness within. The passport into recognition and honour was the Christlike character and not the affluent circumstances. We are being told that the spirit of democracy should universally prevail. It is only as the rights of individuals are mutually respected that we can overcome race and class hatreds with their violent reprisals. "Our gospel is not the survival of the

fit but the revival of the unfit." The missionary is demonstrating this on the foreign field, where distance lends enchantment to the truth. We are doubtless glad to read about the awakening of China and the conversion to Christ of its peoples; but how much do we care about speaking a word for Christ to the Chinese laundryman in our own town? If he were really to attend our church services, some pious folk would surely be scandalised.

The ideas of immortality, equality and fraternity are found in the evangel of Christ. They can be actualised in daily living only as Christ takes control of the mind, the conscience, the heart and the will of those who call themselves Christians. Such a course will doubtless have uncomfortable consequences; but there is no other alternative if the church is to secure a hold on human life in the service of individual and social redemption. We think of Jesus as the sin-revealing, sin-expiating, sin-destroying Christ. This evangel is in the custody of the church, although the church has not taken possession of it, to the extent of letting it have the right of way and compelling other issues to step aside.

(a) Sin is the one sinister fact of human life. It has had divers forms but the results have ever been tragic. The foul pollutions of the first Christian century can be duplicated by the no less fatal corruptions of the twentieth century. What the

Bible says of sin and its serpentine subtlety is endorsed by the conscience of humanity. It is so humiliating a menace because it not only alienates man from God but also introduces the demoniac elements of suspicion and hostility among men and interferes with progress in the arts and crafts of life. The penalties of sin are both sharp and devouring. Jesus has shown, as no other, that sin is an inexcusable act making the sinner blameworthy and guilty. No one can plead that it was inevitable and so find relief for his troubled conscience. In the presence of the sin-revealing One, there is a sifting process. The best and noblest of men acknowledge their failure. Some of their confessions are of classic value. However much we may disagree with their psychology, the mirror is held up to our lives by such searching utterances as the *Psalms,* the *Confessions* of Augustine, *The Imitation of Christ, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,* the *Apologia* of Newman, *My Confession* by Tolstoy.

(b) It is this fact of a stainless life that has enabled Jesus to become the sin-expiating One. We need not stop to discuss any theory of the atonement. It is enough to know that the sacrifice of the Just for the unjust has verily brought many to God, who never could otherwise have been reconciled. You cannot understand the grace of the evangel and the unfailing love of God, until you face Calvary and bow in penitence

before *Christus Reconciliator,* who for us men and for our salvation trod the wine-press alone.

(c) Far more important than any theory is the exultant testimony of a multitude whom no man can number, who have the glowing experience of being delivered from evil and becoming free from the trammels of sinful appetites and passions.

Our evangel then is the good tidings of Jesus Christ, who generously and opulently redeems men from the fatal dominance of sin, and delivers them from the depths of despair, and saves them from the peril of passion, and guides them with ever deepening consecration towards the splendor of light, the fulness of life and the perfection of love in God.

"Not what, but Whom I do believe,
That in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give;—
Not what, but Whom!
For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And his full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe but Whom!
Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illume,
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?—
Not what I do believe,
But Whom!" *

**Bees in Amber,* by John Oxenham. American Tract Society, New York, N. Y.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HERALDS

WE are witnessing to-day a repetition of the state of society in the first century. The world in which the first apostles of Jesus began their work was one of moral chaos, spiritual destitution and social upheaval. Pagan religions had failed to exert any potent influence on morals. In spite of the systems of faith which were exalted and held in high repute, the spirit of man felt crushed and distracted. The extremes of society—the rich and the poor—were living without the motives of purity and nobility. The great middle class was in a healthier state but there was nothing to brag about. The note of discord and unrest was seen on every hand.

> "The world was sinking in a slough
> Of sloth and ease and selfish greed."

In many respects we are better favoured than the early Christians. We have the testimony of the centuries during which Christ has made his appeal and turned multitudes to him. This fact of history must be reckoned with. Just as the scientist and philosopher take note of previous investigations in their departments, so the in-

fluence of Christ during the past must be regarded as an invaluable factor in the solution of our problem how to win the world for him. The closing verse in the gospel of Mark reads: "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed." The book of Acts richly illustrates the ways in which this was done. The narrative shares the glow of the movement. It was a company of devoted men and women who undertook the business of magnifying the name of Jesus Christ. Opposition and persecution only stimulated their activities. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the opponents of the gospel increased their fiery hostility and undertook a systematic campaign of assault so that many were compelled to leave Jerusalem. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." The reference is to the rank and file of the disciples who realised their obligation as missionaries. One conspicuous result was the capture of Antioch for Christ. This city at once became the centre of a notable evangelistic and missionary campaign. These earnest Christians threw themselves heart and soul into the movement. The loyalty of love for Jesus so fired their lives that their faith was spread in the very act of living. They themselves were the most vital part of their testimony. In the words of Bishop Westcott, they were "a living Gospel, a message of God's

good-will to those with whom they lived and suffered." They took with them an experience and not a theory; they proclaimed a person and not a doctrine. It was therefore impossible to suppress them. Peter voiced their sentiments when he said to the Jewish Council: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Silence was out of the question and their influence penetrated near and far, enabling them to score unprecedented triumphs in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The evangel of redemption was worthily proclaimed. Their preaching of purity was consistently supported by their practise of it. The water of life did not flow through rusty pipes; it was therefore sweet and refreshing. The Sanhedrin, before whom Peter and John appeared to answer charges, were impressed by the boldness of these men. Their behaviour recalled that of their Master, whose calmness and courage some of them had witnessed. "And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Herein is the splendour and power of the Christian life, that it is patterned after Jesus, whose possessing spirit reproduces in his followers the unique traits of character which were so distinctive of our Saviour and Lord. What he was in such sublime grace, they also can become by faith in him. "Jesus Christ shows us in living definition what the Christian ought to be." The Apostolic Church was fully persuaded of this truth, and had the

courage to accept it for themselves as well as to commend it to others. These living epistles were more intelligible and persuasive than the written ones. What counted most was not the argument of logic but the appeal of life; not the declaration of a creed but the exhibition of a character. Their glowing experience of the grace of Jesus gave them the consciousness of his forgiveness. The conviction of his redeeming love thus induced them to make consecration of their lives to him, who in his own person had brought to them freedom from moral slavery, redemption from spiritual bondage and relief from social pressure. Since then Jesus Christ has ever remained the central fact in the life of the world, regarded with eagerness by some, with confusion by others, but with satisfaction by all who have accepted him.

> "Sweetest note in seraph's song,
> Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
> Sweetest carol ever sung,
> Jesus! blessed Jesus!

The Christian experience was something unique in the first century. It is even so to-day although we are familiar with its features. It has never failed to secure a favourable verdict for the Christ, who has received the allegiance of the highest reason and the most enlightened conscience of every age and land. The same is true of lesser grades of intelligence. We think of such extreme cases as are cited in "Twice Born Men"

by Begbie and "The Everlasting Mercy" by Masefield, and it makes us grateful to know that the power of the living Saviour is effective among men who have lapsed into the moral depths. Those who were not so desperately alienated from God have also been reconciled and brought into filial relations with the Heavenly Father. It is through Jesus Christ that they have all been able to find themselves and to realise the best for them in the purpose of redemption. "The saved soul, if saved in Love's name," writes Boyce Gibson, "must itself become a saviour; for the spiritual life, as Love conceives it, is by nature self-communicative, invasive, redemptive." It is not enough to rejoice in the promise of the gospel, which is forgiveness; we must also rejoice in the pressure of the gospel, which is fidelity to Christ in making him known. We shall then be able to exult in the power of the gospel which has saved unto the uttermost and will continue to do so.

Here then we are confronted by the all-important question of personality. What is this but character which is the result of a series of practices and habits quietly and diligently pursued in the obscure routine and daily grind of life. A full heart will act with spontaneity, cordiality and generosity. Such a beautiful spirit which manifests itself in deeds is due to that subtle and evasive but very real thing known as a redeemed and consecrated personality. The

spirit of love accepts no limits and its fruitage is both versatile and abundant. We think of love as the clear illuminator, the strong liberator, the complete transformer of life in every condition, of weal or of woe. We do not think of it merely as an emotion, although even so it has been the bringer of untold blessing to the human race, through parenthood, filial devotion, patriotism, and the myriad forms in which it has found expression. There is no need to apologise for emotionalism. As Professor Coe has well said in "The Religion of a Mature Mind": "We are suffering not from excess of emotion in religion, but rather from too little emotion, from the narrowness of our emotional range, and especially from neglect of the more robust emotions." He further states that: "Three great changes are coming over the practical life of Jesus' disciples. First, the Christian life is being simplified; second, its ideals are being socialised; third, its motives are being intensified. The substitution of a simple for a complex creed appears at first sight to imply sacrifice of truth, but in the end we discover that what we have lost in the range of our pretensions we have gained in the stability of our faith. Similarly, the abandonment of a scheme of rules in favour of a simple principle or motive appears like letting go something of virtue, but we find that it is progress from letter to spirit, from that which kills to that which makes

live. Simplification of the issues of life, moreover, makes it harder for us to dodge them, or to thin out our consecration." This is really a return to the New Testament standard of thought and life. When we read of the advances of that early century, telling of comprehensiveness and progress due to the influence of Christ-filled personalities, let us not doubt the veracity of the record but take it at its face value, as it points out to us the better course that we should follow.

There are several things which stand out in the life of the early Christians which may well be followed by modern Christians. They were intensely in earnest and were fully swayed by their convictions. A man who is sincere even though he may be mistaken, has a better chance of persuading people than the other who is lukewarm, although he may be in possession of God's truth. *Earnestness* is single-mindedness of purpose which says "This one thing I do" and therefore subordinates everything else to it. It is not difficult to know where such a person stands. He is never on the fence and under no circumstance will he compromise if principle is at stake. He realises the seriousness of the issues and is ever intent on duty in season and out of season. Who can turn down such an individual or resist the winsomeness of his speech and action? There is nothing of the fanatic in such behaviour but a sober reasonableness, like that shown by Paul

when he argued with Felix about righteousness, self-mastery and the future judgment, and when on a different occasion he appealed to Agrippa, wishing from the depths of his being that the king himself might also become a Christian.

Another quality which invariably accompanies earnestness is *certainty.* It was not sinking ground on which they stood, for they had the assurance of experience that "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." There was the note of finality permitting of no denial nor dispute that "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." This consentient testimony of many witnesses could hardly be challenged with any chance of its being refuted. Principal P. T. Forsyth once said that the ancient prophet responded to the summons with the quick answer "Here am I!" But the modern prophet speaks out of confusion and despair, and asks: "Where am I?" Such an attitude of doubt and perplexity can never accomplish much. It was Phillips Brooks who counselled, saying: "Be sure of God and yourself and of the love between your soul and his, and then shrink from no changefulness, cling to no present, be ready for new skies, new tasks, new truths." Such confidence did they of the first century have.

There was thus begotten in them the spirit of

joy which was full of gladness and glory. It charmed away their despair and weariness; it worked like a spell over souls diseased and perplexed by sin; it was a precious cordial when borne down by the weight of care and trouble. The voice of song from the heart, the witness to joy from the depths, the temper of peace in truth, will do more to convince the world of the power of the evangel, which is truly good news, than any other seemingly strong arguments. Joy will further dispel worry, which William James defined as "fearthought as distinct from forethought." It will also give the restful disposition which is so unlike the fret and strain and humid distemper of much modern Christianity.

Joy is of such consequence because it quickens *enthusiasm.* This is the spirit of buoyancy and optimism, of indomitable faith and unyielding vitality. This it is that inspires and impels us and hastens us on to victory. This is the spirit which has purified the spirit and enlightened the vision of those who made great ventures on God and who enlisted on stalwart adventures for God. Hence they were aggressive and bold to take initiative in making the approach to the needy soul. When we think of so many who are unchurched and indifferent, and even resentful and hostile, it is clear that they can be won, if at all, only by those who are endowed with a large supply of enthusiasm, that wavers not but which

increases in endurance through patience. "The church lives," says W. Robertson Nicoll, "only by capture, by booty, by winning over from the world the citizens that make her numbers." Donald Hankey in one of his last papers wrote: "There is only one way to win men to Christ, and that is to show to them something of his love, and humility, and quiet strength, and humorous commonsense, his distrust of the efficacy of human aids to success, and his quiet confidence in the power of love and truth." Saul Kane in "The Everlasting Mercy" recognised his obligation in words which should be used by every Christian:

> "I knew that I was done with sin,
> I knew that Christ had given me birth,
> To brother all the sons of earth."

These men of Jesus of the early dawn carried with them a sacramental spirit to impart the grace of the gospel of love and redemption to all who were without its blessed benefits. Divine virtue thus went forth from them to heal, to comfort, to purify and to gladden troubled lives. They gave themselves to the work, not as though it were a superficial performance and a perfunctory task, to be gotten through as speedily as possible. They took it as a privileged toil at which they continued until nightfall. Their persistence they received through intimate and constant association with him who came, not to be ministered unto

but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. It is said of Fra Angelico that he painted the Crucifixion on his knees and with deep emotion. He is reported to have said that "He who would do the work of Christ must dwell continually with him." Such was the practice of the first followers as it has been that of the faithful in every generation. They caught the spirit of the Master and so they had his accent and manner, his purpose and bearing, his ministry and service. Their character was marked by quietness and confidence, strength and repose, joy and patience, assurance and endurance. Thus they gave answer to controversy and criticism, and were more than conquerors through him that loved them and loveth us.

"O blessed work for Jesus!
O rest at Jesus' feet!
There toil seems pleasure,
My wants are treasure,
And pain for him is sweet.
Lord, if I may,
I'll serve another day!"

CHAPTER THREE

THE SUPREME UNCTION

THE work of the first Christian community was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost. It was signalised by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. But we must not think of Pentecost in terms of the calendar, for there was a continuous experience of energy which increased from more to more according to the faith, love and obedience of the disciples. The initial enduement was marked by the gift of tongues which was more a freedom of speech for testimony than any ecstatic exhibitions. The men who had been timid and fearful were now possessed of abounding courage and fearless aggressiveness. In their desire to exalt the Name that is above every name, they went out of the way to proclaim its virtues. Such was their ardour that they broke through national barriers and age-long prejudices and proclaimed to Jew and Samaritan, to Roman and Greek, the glories of the Christ. Converts multiplied wherever these flaming evangelists went. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The forward movements were all accompanied by spiritual exhibitions which were distinct manifestations of the working of the Holy

Spirit in and through these believers, for the greater glory of God and his Christ.

It was this fact of the indwelling spirit which explains the intrepid energy, the zealous perseverance, the holy enthusiasm, the inspirational devotion of the early Christians. God was not afar off but near at hand, and they had a vivid consciousness of the divine presence. They gave the impression that they had the best thing in the world. They further let it be known in so attractive a manner that enquirers appeared who promptly entered into the enjoyment of the Pentecostal blessedness. The fulness of the Spirit was the secret of their conspicuous success as it was the primary and indispensable qualification for effective evangelism. The divine Spirit did not touch them from without but transformed them from within. So one chased a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, illustrating at once the source of their ability which was from above, and the significance of their unity, in that two men, in the communion of the Spirit, did not do twice the work of one but ten times the work of one, according to the process of multiplication in the spiritual world.

There may be other advantages like organisation and scholarship and institutions, but they are of real worth only when they are connected with the dynamo of God. Thus did there come power to move men—to enlighten the mind, to stir

the conscience, to warm the heart, to direct the will and to sway the life Godwards. Take the case of Apollos who was both learned and eloquent. But he was at best only a preacher of ethical culture and his appeals continued to be ineffectual until he received the evangelical experience. A similar illustration was that of Thomas Chalmers who was an exemplary minister so far as he went. But there came a spiritual crisis when, after much searching, he made the great surrender, and then his career witnessed a release of energies that made him the conspicuous leader of the church in Scotland and one of the great Christian prophets of the nineteenth century. Go back in time to the twelve men whom Paul met at Ephesus. They were earnest and sincere and willing to work, but they were without spiritual ability. They had received the baptism of repentance unto a great expectation of the coming Messiah. The deliverer had already come, of which they were not aware, and so Paul offered them the baptism of redemption unto a gracious experience and a glorious enduement. Pentecost is related to Calvary and the two must never be separated. There can be renewal of life only as there is redemption from sin. The Holy Spirit has been well described as "the missing factor in our personality." It was only after these twelve men accepted Christ as Saviour that they experienced the spirit of revival and quick-

ening, which radically changed them. The abiding presence of the Spirit with them and within them empowered and enabled them to become effectual helpers of the apostle in the evangelisation of Ephesus and around. Until the fire of the Spirit fell on them they were arrested in their movements, but afterwards they had grip and tone and resonance. They were emancipated from all encumbrances and entered upon the campaign with the white heat of enthusiasm. Under these circumstances, we are not surprised to read of the mighty revival which swept through the city, so that Diana the goddess had to give way to Christ the Redeemer.

This is the central issue before the Christian church. Questions of organisation and method are absolutely subordinate to the vital question of the control of our life by the Holy Spirit. Other matters are to be determined by local necessities but this is the preëminent consideration, to be faced everywhere and by everyone with seriousness and urgency. There can be union and unity only *in* the Holy Spirit; there can be communion only *of* the Holy Spirit; there can be power only *through* the Holy Spirit; there can be advance only *with* the Holy Spirit. If we work independently of this divine agency we are bound to fail. This indeed has been the case, as we think of the present spiritual helplessness of the church. We do not deny the activity of ecclesiastical machin-

ery of all types and sizes, but there seems to be a strange lack of power. Only the enlightening and energising Spirit can make of the church an inspired and inspiring people, who by reason of their superior vitality will destroy the enervating and enfeebling atmosphere of the world, with its disregard and discounting of the creative and redemptive presence of the everlasting God. This will give the aroma and fragrance of the full Christian life with its exuberance of joy and gladness. The melody in the heart will express itself in song. The power of song is mighty. That is why our soldiers in training are taught to sing. If there is anything worth singing about, it will drive out all the poisonous vapours which depress the spirits. The languid feeling, the laggard movement, the weary look, the sense of defeat, will be replaced by buoyant optimism, gladsome endurance, dauntless vigour and singing confidence.

What do we commonly find in the church? There are lines of weariness on the face when it should reflect the light of heaven. Instead of the animating note of conviction we hear what might be called machine-made opinions with the clang and clatter of chains, more suggestive of bondage than of freedom. A present illumination will not lead us nervously seeking for precedents but will give us independence of the past, which need not necessarily imply that we lose our respect for

the honoured and holy past. The desire for a higher life, a closer walk with God, a fuller sense of his fellowship, a keener insight in discerning his will, a heartier willingness to remedy the wrongs of life even at the cost of sacrifice, a more eager response to the cry of need and anguish, a readier sympathy with the sufferer are among the marks of the militant church. But the attitude and life of Christians hardly convey the impression made by their Master, who said of himself: "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Surely there is a distinction that needs to be clearly understood, a truth that must be accepted, an emphasis that should be recovered by the church. We are straitened in ourselves and so we have become limited in the exercise of that influence which is strictly conditioned by the daily, personal renewal of the Holy Spirit. Doctor J. H. Jowett's testimony in his volume, "The Passion for Souls," deserves to be most earnestly considered. "Speaking for myself, I have to say that even when for a day I enter upon my inheritance, and realise the ineffable nearness of the great Companion-Spirit, the strain not only goes out of my mind and heart, but I feel the very wrinkles and care-lines being smoothed out of my face. If we were children of Pentecost, living up to our spiritual times, heart's-ease would bloom just within our gate, and the weary wayfarer would be stopped by its perfume, and would

question us as to the secret and manner of its growth."

At different periods in the history of the church, great truths which were overlooked and neglected have arrested attention like the resplendence of the sun at high-noon. Such occasions have been invariably followed by revivals, when the church entered as it were upon a new career in a spirit of rejuvenescence. So was it at the Reformation, when Luther declared that a man is justified by faith. So was it at the Evangelical revival, when Wesley proclaimed the assurance of salvation and the witness of the Spirit. So in the recent awakening of the social conscience, when the church is being brought to see the imperious necessity of applying the social teachings of Jesus, the prophets and the apostles for the Christianisation of all society. So also after the church has passed through the fiery ordeal of war, it will realise how utterly inadequate is reliance on temporal resources. It will then seek and obtain the spiritual reinvigoration that comes from the eternal Spirit of the living God. Well for us if the sense of insufficiency has already smitten us. We shall then be driven to our knees in penitent supplication, in genuine surrender, in sincere consecration, to obtain the power which will give us greatest capacity and largest achievement. Professor J. Rendel Harris, a New Testament scholar and one of the rare

spiritual teachers of the church, says in "Aaron's Breastplate": "To put the matter plainly for practical people, the Pentecostal gift is, to a large extent, one of the lapsed experiences of the Christian Church. Every believer ought to have the experience; only a few really have it and confess it. For us, then, it is not a question how the first believers reached the blessing, but how may modern believers get back to it. As far as we are concerned, the gift and grace of which we speak lies in the Spiritual Lost Property Office. And if that is so, I say without hesitation that a minute description of the lost property is not necessary to the establishment of a claim. The fact that you are seeking something which you have lost is presumptive evidence in your favour. . . . And while we value exactness in spiritual things, wherever it can be obtained by creatures as normally inexact as ourselves, we need not think that it all turns on an exact definition. The theology of the experience is not absolutely necessary to the experience. What is necessary is that we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. What is certain is that if we do so hunger we shall be sated."

Our identity is not lost when we thus identify ourselves with God. Our individuality is rather deepened and intensified and our faculties are reinforced. There is a marked release of energy which enhances personality. What is latent

comes to the surface, and powers of which we were hardly aware are stirred within us. In a very literal and true sense we become a new creation, even the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works, "in righteousness and holiness of truth." There is no room in such a life for the pettiness of selfishness and strife, for the rancour of discord and jealousy, for the bitterness of spite and ill-will. We shall, instead, give diligence, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We shall see to it that the peace of Christ rules in our hearts and that the word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom; and whatsoever we do, in word or deed, we shall do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to the Spirit of the Master, who did always those things that pleased the Father. Paul condemned the Corinthian Christians because their behaviour was un-Christlike; and he pointed out how absurd it was to expect to win the world by unwinsome means. The Holy Spirit is a glad Spirit. He does not make for confusion and disorder but for harmony and unity. He inspires to steadfastness and continuance in well-doing. He is the Spirit of *truth* and those who are influenced by him have the note of reality and genuineness. He is the Spirit of *holiness;* the Christian character is therefore distinguished by healthy and wholesome virtues. He is the Spirit of *power;* the life which is strengthened by him does not yield to despair,

nor surrender to defeat, nor give way to discouragement. Thus did those men of the New Testament live; and as you read this remarkable little book you never come across the minor key in the music of their Spirit-filled lives. Every page is written in the style of the doxology, although its writers had suffered much which might have justified the passing lapse into an occasional complaint. They were constantly aware of the rich resources of their ally, the divine Companion; and even when it was darkest they were certain that the rift in the cloud would appear somewhere, somehow, sometime. In this confidence they were heroically sustained by the blessed Presence and they had the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

When you are run down physically hard tasks are difficult and you feel a nervous strain in everything. A tonic is then necessary to brace up the system. When you suffer from spiritual depression and are easily upset, when you are quickly discouraged and lightly lose heart, it may be due to general depletion. But do not sit under a juniper tree. "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord." You will there learn that his presence is not in the strong wind nor in the earthquake nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. As you listen you will hear: and when you understand, obey. Thus will you be refreshed at the fountain of life and be able to lead others also

to him who giveth what shall become in each one "a well of water springing up unto eternal life." The source of power is within your reach. But you cannot receive its benefits unless you are willing to let the spirit of self give way to the Spirit of God. Thus only could you be controlled, directed and sustained by him, who is the life of life, for your joy and rejoicing in all things.

"Spirit, who makest all things new,
Thou leadest onward: we pursue
The heavenly march sublime.
'Neath thy renewing fire we glow,
And still from strength to strength we go,
From height to height we climb.

"In thee we rise, in thee we rest;
We stay at home, we go in quest,
Still thou art our abode.
The rapture swells, the wonder grows,
As full on us new life still flows
From our unchanging God."

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CENTRAL PRACTICE

IT was only after Pentecost that the disciples understood the true value of prayer. They were instructed to wait for the promise of the Father before undertaking their appointed work of evangelism. They therefore with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer. But this period of energetic expectation was interrupted by Peter. He suggested that they should take some time to select a successor to Judas the traitor. The choice fell on Matthias of whom we hear nothing in the later activities of the church. I cannot give up the thought that this was a premature and mistaken move. God had in mind a different sort of man to fill this vacancy. He was "born out of due time," to use his own words; but he was to appear on the scene at the appointed time to discharge a magnificent apostleship, in the spread of the evangel. By the grace of God, Paul made room for himself from the beginning. It has frequently happened in the history of the church that men have tried to improve the divine program instead of carrying it out in obedience, and have thereby placed themselves farther from the goal than when they started out. The first thing and

the only thing that the Lord required his disciples to *do* was to pray and wait for the enduement by the Holy Spirit. They would then understand how best to fulfil their commission and introduce new and more effective methods of work. A finely constructed engine according to the latest model is of no value unless it has steam or electricity. More important than perfecting the organisation as to the *personnel* of the leadership and the like is to obtain the capital wherewith to operate it. What John Mott recently said is sadly true: "An alarming weakness among Christians is that we are producing Christian activities faster than we are producing Christian experience and Christian faith." In spite of the movement and noise of ecclesiastical machinery, the results accomplished are out of all proportion to the efforts put forth. The outstanding cause is honestly stated in a volume of essays entitled, "Concerning Prayer," by representative leaders of British thought. "In all the churches of late there has resounded a call to prayer. It has met with singularly little response. The reason is not far to seek. The present generation is ready to respond to a call for higher service—that has been demonstrated by the war—but the times do not allow men to put thought and effort into anything unless they are convinced that it is well worth while. And at the back of most men's minds there is the belief, more or less clearly de-

fined, that prayer is an activity the value of which is so open to question, that for the men and women who have to carry on the world's work it decidedly is not worth while; it may safely be left to ministers and monks and to pious ladies who have nothing else to do."

This is a challenge of indifference which must be accepted. If religion is union with God then there must be communion with God, in order that its efficacy might be increasingly experienced. Now, prayer is the essence of religion, and the consciousness of the love of God is the essence of prayer. So that without the practise of prayer we are left without any foundation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave to the disciples the accent and authority of prayer. It was offered in the name of Christ, whose will and purpose they accepted for their own guidance. He strictly enjoined them to cultivate the true inwardness of life, and he made it clear that it was possible only through prayer. Certain conditions must however be diligently observed. "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." It is a place of *quiet*—this of prayer, where the distractions of contrary counsels and interests are set aside for the sake of meditation. It is also a place of *silence,* where we cease our clatter and listen to the still small voice

for understanding and direction. It is further a place of *calmness,* when the winds of God blow over the soul and there comes the peace of God which passeth all understanding. The terms of the divine promise are explicit: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The emphasis is on the spirit and attitude of those assembled, without any reference to numbers. When those who are in personal fellowship with God associate with one another in the exercises of supplication, they enter into the richest religious experiences. They pray in unity of spirit and there is unanimity as their desires sound together. Deliverance came to Peter from prison in answer to the united, fervent, continued prayer of the disciples. When Peter and John were threatened by the authorities, they returned to their company, and when "they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were gathered together." These two instances, and others can be multiplied, carry their own message and need no note nor comment. Think of John Wycliffe and his russet preachers, of Luther, Melanchthon and their associates, of Wesley and the Holy Club, of Livingstone in Africa, of Paton in the New Hebrides, of the Haystack meeting, of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, of George Müller, of Dwight L. Moody. The outburst of spiritual activity and zeal with which these several men were connected was directly

due to the fellowship of prayer. It can never be otherwise. We hold conventions and conferences, to listen to noted speakers and to reports from committees. We then pass resolutions and flatter ourselves that everything is prosperous. It is a delusion. At very few of our religious gatherings does prayer occupy a conspicuous place, and when it does appear it takes an apologetic stand behind a song service or some such device, which is more or less of a compromise measure. The pathos of it all is that we are not conscious of the fact of loss, and yet we are being smitten hip and thigh by the enemy, and are left high and dry.

Real prayer depends on a true conception of God. He is not a harsh tyrant before whom we should grovel in abject submission. He is not a whimsical taskmaster whose judgment is warped by passion and prejudice. He is not a blood-thirsty demon who is satisfied only with rivers of blood. He is our Father who does not need to be coaxed or bribed or flattered or entreated with much speaking before he hears us. He does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and he confers his blessings with a liberal hand, without stint or limitation. Hence the encouraging exhortation: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in absolute assurance of faith." Much of the trouble with most prayers is the lack of faith. Hence there is uncertainty and hesitation. If we actually believe that prayer is the mightiest

force on earth to sway the destinies of men, we will rely on it with whole-hearted abandon and use it with enthusiastic confidence. In the presence of the withered fig tree, Jesus urged his disciples to have faith in God, and he added: "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it." How different this is to that cringing attitude which is common in many books of devotion. Turn to "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius," and you find that the spirit of the suppliant is both pagan and artificial, and radically different to the exhilarating atmosphere of filial freedom which we breathe in the presence of Jesus. Or read the "Private Devotions" of Bishop Andrewes, and in spite of Doctor Alexander Whyte's eulogy, you find yourself in a world of ascetic mortifications, so unlike the breezy open air of the gospels. Jesus was much in prayer but it did not consist of protracted petitioning as of continuous communing with God. When demands on his time and energy pressed on him, he insisted on spending time in solitude for intercession and inspiration. "In the morning," before the distractions began to interfere; "when even was come," at the close of the day's labours, Jesus found refreshment in the presence of his Father. This secret of power has been enjoyed by others who have been with the Master in the

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weakness rather than with their strength." Forsyth, who quotes this sentence from George Meredith, adds: "Let us beware of a pietist fatalism which thins the spiritual life, saps the vigour of character, makes humility mere acquiescence and piety only feminine, by banishing the will from prayer as much as thought has been banished from it." Prayer when rightly understood is the real battlefield of life. The inevitable wrestling in prayer makes it a serious, an exacting and an exhausting business. In the garden our Lord sweat as it were great drops of blood, in his stern endeavour, at that hour of darkness, to enter into the full counsel of God with unreserved surrender. The outcome in Gethsemane explains his victory at Calvary. If we would meet dark days and nerve-racking difficulties, it must be in a spirit of calmness and self-possession which can be obtained by the use of the sacrament of prayer.

"Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord on the earth shall cease.
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avails the blessed time to expedite.
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see;
Pray to be perfect, though material leaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away."

Answers to prayer do not consist so much in receiving what we ask as in getting insight and moral strength for the performance of duty. It is illumination that we need, which gives us guidance and ability to do at any cost. "We know not how to pray as we ought," wrote the apostle, "but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us." So if we pray in the Spirit, weakness will turn to strength, uncertainty to confidence, fear into courage, anxiety into assurance, panic into peace. These are the true answers to the waiting soul, and it means that we obtain inspiration for endurance and continuance in the work of evangelism. How easy it is to become discouraged, especially when results do not immediately follow earnest and sustained efforts! But by prayer the mind is strengthened, the will is invigorated, the life is kept joyous and equable. But let us not infer that prayers are not literally answered. The lives of Christians abundantly illustrate that fervent supplications are actually heard. We have only to mention the names of such leaders like Andrew Murray, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, Chinese Gordon, George Matheson, to be reminded that this is one of the joys of the prayer life. "No really great theologian, no really great believer," says W. Robertson Nicoll, "has ever lived to whom prayer was not infinitely more important than any mere exercise of the intellect." Let us recover the habit of prayer which has been

lost by spiritual inertia and attention to secondary matters. You can do this by directly giving yourself to prayer and by keeping at it, until the cloud appears in the brazen sky. But do not stop when the showers descend. Keep up the blessed practice and continue unceasing in prayer for the triumphs of the Church and the Kingdom throughout the world.

"If we with earnest effort could succeed
To make our life one long connected prayer,
As lives of some perhaps have been and are;
If never leaving Thee, we had no need
Our wandering spirits back again to lead
Into Thy presence, but continued there,
Like angels standing on the highest stair
Of the sapphire throne, this were to pray indeed.
But if distractions manifold prevail,
And if in this we must confess we fail,
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HOLY PASSION

WE can really understand a person if we know what is the underlying purpose of his life. There are many interests in most lives but back of all there is what Doctor Henry VanDyke has well called a "ruling passion." If that is known you have got at the secret of personality. "Music, nature, children, honour, strife, revenge, money, pride, friendship, loyalty, duty—to these objects and to others like them, the secret power of personal passion often turns, and the life unconsciously follows it, as the tides in the sea follow the moon in the sky." Many apparent inconsistencies are also better understood and they cease to be regarded as such when we know what is the absorbing thought, aim and desire of any individual. Many errors of judgment can thus be avoided as we get behind the scenes of life. John Morley in his life of Gladstone refers to the wonderful versatility of this British statesman and goes on to say: "All his activities were in his mind one. Political life was only part of his religious life. It was religion that prompted his literary life. It was the religious motive that through a thousand avenues and channels stirred

him and guided him in his whole conception of active, social duty." The apostle Paul frequently refers to the purpose that was controlling, stimulating and compelling him. "The love of Christ constraineth us," is a brief but weighty sentence which lucidly expresses the prevailing passion of his life. In the light of it, we are able to understand and appreciate his whole career. He was indebted to the Redeemer Christ beyond all that tongue could tell, and daily did his sense of obligation increase. The promise of the gospel of salvation was so thoroughly fulfilled in his own life that he experienced the passionate passion of the gospel and was ready on every occasion to preach its good tidings. Whether he was speaking to a single individual like Felix the governor or to Onesimus the runaway slave; or whether he was addressing a company, composed of royalty or of the common people, he was always eager to induce his hearers to accept the message of Christ and receive deliverance from sin. He became all things to all men that he might by all means save them. It was not rhetoric when he soberly declared: "I could have wished myself accursed and banished from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my natural kinsmen"; and again when he said: "I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." It was this same irrepressible ardour which he showed when, after he was stoned at Lystra almost to the point of

death, he returned to that same city in a few days, fearless and faithful (Acts 14:19-21).

Paul was certain beyond any shadow of doubt that the world was alienated and estranged from God. He was also confident that only through Christ could man be restored to friendship with God. He knew that many had wandered away from the Father owing to ignorance of his character and a misunderstanding of his purpose of world-wide redemption. He always made a point of emphasising the truth that all people are equally precious in the sight of God and that in Christ every wall of separation has for ever been abolished, be it racial, ethnic, national, social or what not. He moreover had the courage to accept this conclusion, although he was severely criticised by some of his fellow-Christians for going too far and letting down the bars of inherited privilege, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was the first to recognise only the privilege of genuine merit and intrinsic worth. It is certainly refreshing to be in the company of this fervent preacher who was so far ahead of his times, as indeed he is of our own times, and whose teaching of Christ the Saviour and Unifier of all peoples puts the blush of shame upon us for being so provincial and superficial.

We are doubtless familiar with the words of Jesus spoken in defence or in explanation of his practices; but they have a deeply profound mean-

ing when considered in the light of recent events. "The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost," was the reason why he extended the hospitality of the gospel to Zaccheus the outcast. "The Son of man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many," was said to his disciples, who were obsessed by thoughts of place and position and ignored the uncomfortable mission of sacrificing and sacrificial service of those who were socially submerged, for whom also Christ had died. Jesus treated everyone with respect, and by his gracious bearing he drew out of the inner recesses of the soul those feelings and desires which find satisfaction only in fellowship with the heavenly Father. Nowhere do we see any spirit of indifference or hopelessness concerning the spiritual possibilities of men. Jesus always had a wholesome confidence in the redemptibility of everyone. His life was therefore heartily consecrated to the business of winning them for God, with an enthusiasm that was continuous and costly. It involved the sacrifice on the Cross, which was the price of this all-dominating passion for the highest welfare of the whole human race. "Perhaps the conscience of him who feels that he is obliged to go as far as this for men, most of whom he has never seen, none of whom can wholly please him, and many of whom pain him unutterably is the crowning marvel. The sense of obligation revealed at Calvary is its

supreme surprise." So wrote Doctor Coffin in his searching volume of sermons on "Social Aspects of the Cross." On another page he says: "It is only when we are convinced of Christ's individual concern in every one of the millions of China, or of the thousands on a congested city block that we are at one with him. We then cease arguing about their worth, their improvability, their need of more justice or better religion. What each is to the heart of God in Christ, that and nothing less he is to us."

This deep sense of obligation was shared to the full by Paul and the writers of the New Testament. "We love, because he first loved us," said John. The love for Christ thus had a reflex influence. You cannot love Christ without loving what he loved, and showing your love in ways that are suggestive of his spirit. "I desire to burn out for my God," said Henry Martyn, as he began missionary work in India. How very like Paul, who spoke of the constraining love of Christ. The word *constrain* has the elements of strength. It describes an active and not a passive experience. Restraint is negative, and does not lead to redemption, either of oneself or of others. Constraint implies an urging and an impelling. It holds together the several impulses of the soul; it shuts them in and confines within bounds like the banks of a river for depth, and so there is concentration for effectiveness. Such was the ex-

perience which led Paul to say: "This one thing I do." Everything else was subordinated to the supreme business of bringing men to God. His evangelistic spirit has been well described by F. W. H. Myers in the stirring poem, "Saint Paul":

"Oft when the Word is on me to deliver
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or the river,
Melts in a lucid Paradise of air;—

"Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things;—

"Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

No one can feel in this way except those who have the vision of Christ. It was said of Hugh Price Hughes, the English Methodist, that he recovered for his church its ancient passion for the souls of men and set it in living power in the stream of modern life. But Hughes believed in the redemption of the whole man and was one of the pioneers in preaching social Christianity. In replying to a charge that he was not preaching the gospel when he discussed social questions, he said: "I might have settled the matter by saying that I had no disembodied 'souls' in my congrega-

tion, but that I had souls incarnate, souls attached to bodies and that we must deal with man as a complex being. There is too much truth in the saying I have often quoted of late that 'some very earnest Christians are so diligently engaged in saving *souls* that they have no time to save *men* and *women*.' " Those who have the passion and compassion of Jesus will be stirred to carry out his whole program and they will co-operate to do so with joy. There will be earnestness and seriousness of purpose; there will be tenderness and tactfulness of manner; there will be patience and endurance in practice; there will be sensitiveness to every need and readiness to adjust ourselves to the divers and distracted relationships of life. Enthusiasm is so balanced and buoyant a disposition that it knows nothing of times and seasons. It has convictions as to the rightfulness of the cause; it has courage in the face of ridicule and calumny; it shows continuance in well-doing; it keeps its hand on the plough and its eyes looking forward until the whole field is cultivated. Just as Jesus came into the world with a redemptive passion and was swayed by it to the very last and unto the uttermost, so must it be with every Christian, who offers not a system of morality but a heart of love.

> "One holy passion filling all my frame;
> The kindling of the heaven-descended dove,
> My heart an altar, and thy love the flame."

Love always means sacrifice. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Doctor Jowett well says: "The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of bleeding hearts. If that succession be broken we lose our fellowship with the King. As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless. When our sympathy loses its pang we can no longer be the servants of the passion." But how can sympathy be shown unless we take the point of view of the other person and suffer with him in his sorrow and distress? There is nothing officious nor official but human and humane in such a Christ-inspired fellow-feeling. How can you be friendly unless you bring succour in the hour of need, even at the cost of your own inconvenience and discomfort? How can there be compassion unless you carry the burden on your own soul, even if it must wear you down to the point of exhaustion? Said one of old: "I will not offer unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing." What you do without effort accomplishes little. There must be wrestling in prayer, tirelessness in work, eager watchfulness for opportunities, willingness to continue although repeatedly rebuffed. This is how men have laboured who got results in the home field as well as on the mission field. Father Stanton who worked for fifty years in a congested London parish said that he preferred to be known as "an enthusiast for the love of Jesus." He thus

entered vicariously into communion with Christ, for the sake of saving souls—"to displace vice by purity, hatred by love, despair by joy; working never alone, but with Jesus, and knowing this."

This truly is the spirit of the Cross, and it is indispensable for the possession and the practice of the holy passion. "Paganism is an elaborate device to do without the Cross. Yet it is ever a futile device, for the Cross is in the very grain and essence of all life; it is absolutely necessary to all permanent and satisfying gladness." So wrote Doctor John Kelman in his discerning essay on Thomson's "The Hound of Heaven." It is one of the great poems of English literature and describes the persistent pursuit of God after the soul of man. The seeking God has been perfectly incarnated in Jesus Christ, and we who believe in him must in turn incarnate this spirit of the Saviour in order that a lost world might be brought back to God. Such a course alone will adequately accomplish the task.

This then is the great motive of the church. It is big enough and strong enough, to carry far, even to the ends of the world. Where it operates all lesser things will be shamed out of its presence. The storm of domestic strife will be calmed; the rancour of denominationalism will be suppressed; petty differences will be ignored. The surge and thrill of "love divine, all loves excelling" will burn out the dross of selfishness and enmity, and

bring all lovers of the Lord to love men in his way, and so labour in season and out of season, to bring in that better day of universal blessedness and peace.

"O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling,
To tell to all the world that God is Light;
That he who made all nations is not willing
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.
Publish glad tidings;
Tidings of peace;
Tidings of Jesus,
Redemption and release."

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION

THE greatest results have often been obtained in quiet and out-of-the-way places by people whose names have not come down to posterity. Christianity was established in the city of Antioch after the martyrdom of Stephen by some unknown disciples who were driven out of Jerusalem by the bloody persecution. When Europe was under the pall of spiritual darkness, the Poor Men of Lyons carried about the torch of truth. Wycliffe spread the principles of gospel liberty throughout England with the aid of his russet preachers. The local preachers of Methodism were indispensable in carrying the evangel and they were loyally supported by the followers of John Wesley. The enterprise of foreign missions which began almost simultaneously with the start of Methodism was carried out by consecrated laymen who took service in foreign ports as merchants that they might spread Christ's kingdom, without embarrassing the far too limited exchequer of the missionary society. All these devout folk, and many others like them at different periods of the church's history, made effective

strokes for their Christian convictions by seizing every opportunity which presented itself in their daily intercourse with people. They engaged in "wayside preaching" in the course of business and social relations. Their interest in the subject was so keen and the influence which it exercised over them was so quickening that all they did was for the glory of Christ. They found points of contact in ordinary topics, and in the most natural way they led up to the higher themes of the Christian life, and the purpose of the gospel to Christianise every vocation and avocation. They believed in the sort of social evangelism which is at home in every walk of life, and they maintained that it was most seemly and proper to refer to it in "polite" society, as well as in what by an unnatural distinction is called "religious" society. They evidently thought it strange that anyone should object to the introduction of religion as a topic of conversation. If men talk about what they are most interested, and welcome questions relating to politics, commerce, literature, travel, invention, but at the same time exclude the question of religion, it must be inferred that they are not interested in it. This can hardly be the case, for religion is the most permanent and persistent concern of mankind in every age. The reason why it is not frankly talked about may be because it is not the custom to do so. The notion doubtless prevails that the subject is too sacred

for promiscuous discussion. The fact is that we have lost the art of religious conversation by sheer neglect and disuse. George W. Pepper, himself a layman, suggestively refers to this matter in his Yale lectures, "A Voice from the Crowd." He says: "The rehearsal of one's personal religious experience is a dangerous habit and is to be checked rather than to be encouraged. But the place of religion in life, the nature and method of revelation, the hope of immortality and its bearing upon conduct—these are topics of extraordinary interest, and intelligent men would do well to recognise the fact. We fail to realise that to stifle religion is quite as dangerous as to feign it."

The apostle Paul has many counsels on this subject. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of our mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." The guiding principle of such communications is found in the words of Jesus: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your talk will indicate your manner of life. Can it be that if you say nothing, it is because you have nothing to say? And yet you call yourself a follower of Christ. He expected his disciples to be the salt of the earth and give to society a purifying influence. He desired them to be the light of the world and dispel the

darkness of error and evil. He meant them to be of a communicative disposition and to be cheerful and amiable in sharing their spiritual treasures with others.

Conversation is at once an informal and an informing medium of intercourse. If it is to delight and profit, it must have the elements of courtesy and sympathy, cordiality and interest, goodness and patience, calmness and friendliness. The atmosphere must also be warm and genial, with a sense of leisureliness, free from reserve and cynicism. Conversation is not the small talk of gossip but the enlivening talk of mutual suggestiveness and good cheer. It is the kind of talk that comes spontaneously out of a full mind and a kindly heart, and brings joy and gladness. In true conversation there is a healthy give and take, and the process is exhilarating and enjoyable. Such talkability is altogether unlike what Henry VanDyke calls "the vice of talkativeness," which is "a selfish, one-sided, inharmonious affair, full of discomfort and productive of most un-Christian feelings." What makes the correspondence between souls so attractive is the fact that the talk has to do with personal experiences in all their varied grades and stages. But it is not merely the retailing of personal items that gives spice to conversation. There must be facts of interest, bits of news that give cheer, thoughts that kindle the emotions and stir the affections. In this way

the finest virtues of companionship are cultivated and fellowship widened.

All these qualities which make general conversation attractive must also appear in religious conversation. You cannot interest others in what you are not interested yourself. It is impossible to share in the gifts and graces of religious experience when one has it in doubtful or limited measure. Topics which are threadbare are as stale and distasteful as stories which are known as "chestnuts." There must be freshness and directness, reality and genuineness, warmth and welcome, heartiness and happiness, glow and gladness, cheer and charm.

> "We share our mutual woes,
> Our mutual burdens bear;
> And often for each other flows
> The sympathising tear."

But how can we act in this fraternal manner if we are not familiar with each other's circumstances? Such knowledge is invariably obtained through conversation. It was to encourage this practice that the class meeting was organised by Wesley. Those who desired to speak often one to another came together in an informal way. They were accustomed to meet "in kitchen, or drawing room, hay-loft, coal pit or barn"; and the results more than justified its existence. The class meeting often became the germ-cell of new Methodist societies, and through it the principle of com-

munion found exquisite expression. Mr. Eayrs in "A New History of Methodism," succinctly describes the characteristics of the class meeting, which I gladly quote because it aptly sets forth some of the necessary features which make religious conversation so wholesome and fragrant. "It was marked as non-sacerdotal, since in these gatherings for fellowship ordained and unordained persons dealt freely with the mysteries of the spiritual life; as experimental and practical rather than doctrinaire and controversial, for here everything was brought to the test of common experience; as ethical as well as emotional, for the members knew the conduct of one another and all combined to sustain each in such behaviour as became the gospel and Methodism; as social and gladsome with holy song, rather than self-centred, cloistered and sombre; as free from state aid and control, as it was sustained by the regular freewill offerings of those who voluntarily accepted its ministrations" (Vol. I. 289). Say what we will, the warmth of temperament which has been the glory of Methodism can be explained by the influence of the class meeting, which drew the members into closer bonds of unity and fraternity, and was "an objective visualisation of the principle of communion as Christendom had never before seen." American Methodism has practically given up this distinctive institution, on the plea that it had outgrown its usefulness. An at-

tempt should rather have been made to adjust it to modern needs in harmony with a growing Christian experience. But having let it go, nothing else has taken its place as an agency for the development of free and ready religious speech, concerning the things that are near and dear to life.

So many Christian people surround themselves by inaccessible walls of exclusiveness and they remain silent touching the deep interests of life. Such a spirit of reserve and restraint is most unhealthy. They are sociable enough in a general way but the barriers go up as soon as serious issues are introduced. We have become so afraid of cant and hypocrisy that there is a sentimental sensitiveness about giving oral expression to our religious feelings and desires. The well from which water is not drawn ceases to be sweet and refreshing. In like manner, if we fail to draw from the wells of religious emotion, we had better close them up for the sake of the health of the community. Of all tragic cases are those Christians who illustrate the "law of arrested development." Let us recognise the causes of our distress and honestly remove them. One of these is the lack of "seasoned conversation" and "seized conversation." As we practise this manner of communing, it will be said of us what the prophet wrote of the pious at a time of depression: "They that feared the Lord spake one with

another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." These faithful souls were confronted by a truly dark situation—the priests had become careless, the people were lax in their religious duties, the value of the worship and service of God was questioned. But these select spirits knew better, and they were determined not to surrender to harsh circumstances nor to severe criticisms. They thus conversed often with each other, not about their difficulties but rather about their deliverances, so graciously granted them by the blessed God. There was no pessimistic strain which is not unusual in the modern prayer meeting. There was no tirade nor attack of those who were absent. They met not to tear down each other's faith or to weaken fidelity but to inspirit and encourage one another in every good word and work. They were persuaded that this could be done through optimistic confession of the graciousness, tenderness and redeeming love of God. "A friendly thought," said Carlyle, "is the purest gift that man can afford to man." Where can we obtain this to such great advantage as by rightly directed religious conversation? On this subject, Bunyan has an enlightening word in his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." "Upon a day the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work at my calling; and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door, in the sun, talking

about the things of God; and being now willing to hear their discourse, I drew near to hear what they said; for I was now a brisk talker in matters of religion, but they were far above my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God in their hearts, as also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature: they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil: moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by what means they had been afflicted; and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, and of their unbelief, and did condemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them any good. And methought they spake as if joy did make them speak, with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world—as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours." Notice the spirit of faith, humility and joy in the conversation of these pious women, and how it affected Bunyan who was a stranger to their blessed experience. These features are not common or characteristic of much of our modern Christian

experience. Consider the note of joy more particularly. We may use the triumph song but there is little of the triumph spirit when we sing. As long as valiant souls could come together for mutual uplift, they need find no cause for complaint but many reasons for gratulation as they celebrate the divine mercies which are new every morning. However untoward may be their lot in life they are not exiles from God. Such kindred souls breathe the atmosphere of mutual understanding and find solace in each other's fellowship. They thus become equipped for the struggles, the perils, the obstructions, the disappointments and the mishaps which inevitably come to every life. Their conversation was moreover so healthy because they did not evade the pressing issues but dealt with essential facts and kept back nothing for fear of being censured. They did not hold off at arm's length in suspicion, but spoke in trustfulness and considered how they might stir up each other to love and good works. They did not keep their hearts under lock and key and steel themselves against the approach of friendship; nor on the other hand did they wear their heart on their sleeve and let every chance acquaintance into its sanctities, which are open only to the initiated. Thus they talked freely, fearlessly and fraternally with those who were of one accord. It was done in the name of Christian friendship and for the sake of Christian fellowship, and they had no

reason to regret their congenial associations. They therefore found the promise repeatedly fulfilled: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It was the realised presence of Jesus Christ that gave the tonic air which braced them up for whatever storm or stress awaited them. Ordinary men thus acted with heroic consecration to duty and were courageously calm and self-possessed in the face of defeat or danger. They knew that they had a better possession and an abiding one and they held to this confidence which had great recompense of reward. It was not surprising that thereby they brought cheer to each other, since they were refreshed and strengthened and made glad in the hour of felicity no less than in the hour of adversity. Well might they rejoice as they sang:

> "My Saviour comes and walks with me,
> And sweet communion here have we;
> He gently leads me by the hand,
> For this is heaven's border land."

Viewed at its best, the atmosphere of the world is inhospitable to spiritual ideas and ideals. There is much that is depressing and demoralising and which offers anything but the stimulus that is so needed, especially in these times of upheaval, uncertainty and disaster. "Taken all in all, where," asks Sabatier in "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," "shall

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we find a higher or more universal school of respect and virtue than in the church, a more efficacious means of comfort and consolation than the communion of brethren, a safer tutelary shelter for souls still in their minority." Professor McGiffert recently said: "The church is an engine of untold moral and spiritual power." One way by which it can be brought into active exercise is by the culture of religious conversation. "This is a difficult art," writes Professor Stalker in "Imago Christi." "It must be natural—it must well up out of a heart full of religion—or it is worse than useless. Yet it is of priceless value, and no trouble is too great to be spent in acquiring it. I am not sure but we are more in need of those who can talk about religion than of those who can preach about it." Here then is our great opportunity for effective evangelism. So many are afflicted with anxiety, dismayed by doubt, troubled by perplexity, confused by misunderstanding, misled by false teaching. Seek them and win their confidence and lead them to the fountains of living water.

"I love to tell the story;
More wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies
Of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

THIS is the day of highly perfected machinery when the factories produce articles in large abundance. And yet we must acknowledge the superiority of hand-carved furniture, hand-made lace and hand-painted pictures. Who prefers the reproduction of the phonograph to the skilful playing of the pianist or violinist? We admire the splendid building, so imposing and architecturally perfect; and yet the mason has handled each brick separately with trowel and cement; the carpenter has driven each single nail and riveted it in place; the plumber has looked after every screw and joint in the extensive heating plant; the electrician has cared for each lamp, and all the others who have worked in and around the building have given personal supervision to their tasks. Unless each screw is true and every bolt is strong, the monster airplane must fatally fail. Everyone thus recognises the dignity of trifles and reckons with them at the cost of time and labour. We talk of people in the mass, collectively and generalisingly. Jesus always talked of the individual specifically, and never failed to deal with each person on his own

merits. "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost," and he sought them each one at a time. He avoided the crowds that he might do intensive work with the individual. He thus gave his best to Nicodemus and to Zaccheus, to the Samaritan woman and to Mary Magdalene. That was his consistent policy. Although after his resurrection he appeared to his disciples when they were gathered together, he also had heart-to-heart communings with Peter and Mary and James and others of his followers.

The importance of the individual is to-day accepted in strategic connections. The politician does not forget the value of the single vote at election time, even though he may ignore it the rest of the year. The effective speaker does not address his entire audience but singles out an individual here and there, and appeals to them in a sort of exclusive way and so wins the attention and accord of the rest of his hearers. Vast sums of money are spent on advertising and yet eighty per cent of the successful business is done by personal solicitation. Salesmanship is a science, nay it is an art, even the art of persuasion. Much of its efficient working depends on the pleasing personality of the solicitor, his knowledge of the goods and of the needs of the prospective buyer. All this emphasises the significance of the personal equation. It is also necessary that we know how to discriminate be-

cause people are so widely and radically different, and what appeals to one may by reason of temperament and associations fall flat on another. The wife of Sir Edward Burne-Jones once wrote of her husband: "As a rule Edward was a little irritated by people finding likenesses in one face to another. 'It is difference not likeness that I see,' he would say." All students of human life will endorse this sentiment, for they understand and appreciate "the sacredness of personality."

Consider how the church began. When Andrew and John were won by Jesus on that memorable night, they returned to their homes with the determination to convey to others their convictions concerning Christ the Messiah. Andrew then brought his brother Peter to Jesus, and John his brother James. Peter next led Philip to the Master, and Philip in turn guided Nathaniel to him. From that time on, through the Christian centuries, the gospel has spread through personal efforts. It has often happened that obscure men have brought to Jesus those who became distinguished, and whose remarkable achievements reacted gratifyingly on their little known leaders. Think of Joel Stratton and John Gough, George Warner and Gypsy Smith, Edward Kimball and Dwight L. Moody, Harry Monroe and Billy Sunday. As forcibly illustrating a chain of influences there is the case of Ed-

ward R. Graves, the commercial traveller, who won S. M. Sayford, who then won C. K. Ober, who in turn won John R. Mott, for Christ and his cause. We never know what harvest will come from the seed faithfully sown. It is the personal touch that transmits the power of the evangel. Much misunderstanding and enmity must be removed before the right atmosphere can be created, in which people will come with the request: "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Many people have curious notions concerning the church; they think of it as an institution apart from life and out of sympathy with the struggles of ordinary folk. If these outsiders are to be brought into right relationships, it will be due to work done quietly, patiently, persistently, generously by men and women, who are followers of Christ and members of the church.

It may sound trite and commonplace to say that we must have the experience of Christ's saving grace and be quickened by it to the white heat of enthusiasm before we can go out to speak to others of the Saviour's redeeming love. But let the statement stand, for it is the indispensable condition of spreading the gospel of salvation. Our goodness must have edge to it, if it is to quicken others. Our experience must be vivid, if it is to vitalise others. Our convictions must be decided, if they are to persuade others. Our efforts must be whole-hearted, if they are to affect others. In his great book, "The Meaning of God in Human

Experience,'' Doctor W. E. Hocking, says: ''We know religion when we meet it in persons. We are in no need of definition to guide our eyes, or to help in identifying it. We are perpetually seeing its fruits, or missing them, in our neighbours. We are sensitive even to its shades and degrees; aware of its more or less, its depth, its texture, its resistance.'' Again he says: ''To see the significance of things trivial is the prerogative of greatness, to see everything as bearing upon the whole is both genius and happiness, to see all things *sub specie aeternitatis* is the joy of religion itself.'' If there is love in the heart, it will then set you on fire to become an ardent helper of people, in everything that enables them to have an adequate share of ''the leisure and pleasure and treasure of life.''

The familiar story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch illustrates some of the indispensable qualifications of successful personal work. Philip was chosen at the same time as Stephen, to attend to the temporal matters of the church. But it is very significant that we know hardly anything of their financial and administrative abilities. We know more of their spiritual labours. Stephen was the first martyr, impressive in speech and forcible in persuasion. Philip was an evangelist who led in the notable revival in Samaria. They were both men ''of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.'' The Christian must have a good

reputation and be honourable in all his transactions, so that the finger of scorn and contempt cannot be pointed at him. He must be consistent so that his Christian profession will be manifest in his business, not only by what he says but also by what he does. Every Christian is an antiseptic—the salt of the earth—and no corruption should be tolerated in his company, whether it is the sinister speech or the crooked deal. Philip furthermore was a man of faith. When he heard the voice commanding him to go to the desert, he obeyed, nothing doubting. It meant much for him to leave the revival activities at Samaria, and go to the lonely outskirts of the desert; but he was persuaded that it was a direction of God and not a delusion of the devil. As the chariot approached, he listened to the eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah, and with exquisite tact he approached this eminent prince of Ethiopia, and obtained his consent to act as his interpreter of the prophet's utterances concerning the suffering Messiah. Philip was in such harmony with the divine Spirit, that he was able intuitively to understand this man's needs. He was also in sympathy with the eunuch and showed patient frankness as he led this seeker, step by step, to Jesus Christ.

Many objections which are raised against personal work are purely theoretical. They are generally offered by those who have neither a cor-

rect idea of the purpose of the gospel nor a clear experience of its power in their own lives. I do not mean to say that you will be received with a welcome in every case, as was the happy experience of Philip with the eunuch. You may even be insulted; but if you have the sweetness and sanity of Jesus, you will know how to take these slights; and instead of being readily discouraged, you will be spurred to continue and increase in the good work. If repelled and turned down by one, you may be welcomed by another. Be frank and faithful, be true and tactful, be earnest and enlightening, be friendly and interesting, and you will surely have the joy of winning people, one by one, for Christ and the kingdom of God. The story of the mission field is one continued illustration of the indispensable value of the personal touch in inducing non-Christians to consider and accept the claims of Christ. "The Life of Henry Drummond," by George Adam Smith has several chapters, showing the unique qualities of Drummond in dealing with enquirers, not only in connection with the great mission of Moody but also in his own work among college men. Principal Smith writes: "He [Drummond] worked hard in the inquiry rooms, but shy men, who would not stand up in a meeting, nor enter an inquiry room, waited for him by the doors as he came out, or waylaid him in the street, or wrote, asking him for an interview. He took great trouble with

every one of them, as much trouble and interest as if each was a large meeting." On a man being asked what led him to decide for Christ, he replied, "It was the way Mr. Drummond laid his hand on my shoulder and looked me in the face that led me to Christ." This testimony throws much light on what Drummond wrote in his essay on "Spiritual Diagnosis." He pointed out that the Puritan writers were skilled analysists of human nature but that, "they seem to have applied their power more in the pulpit than the pew. They knew so much about humanity that they had lost what of it they had themselves in the pursuit of it in others. They were most of them wanting in that delicacy of handling which makes analysis effective instead of insulting; and many of the Puritans were quite destitute of the foremost quality which distinguishes the successful diagnosist—respect, veneration even, for the soul of another. A man may be ever so gross and vulgar, but when you come to deal with the deepest that is in him, he becomes sensitive and feminine. Brusqueness and an impolite familiarity may do very well when dealing with his brains, but without tenderness and courtesy you can only approach his heart to shock it. The whole of etiquette is founded on respect; and by far the highest and tenderest etiquette is the etiquette of soul and soul."

The joy of personal work, only they know who

have served in it. It was said of Father Stanton of St. Alban's, London, that individual work lay nearest to his hand and his heart, and that, "he excelled in personal ministration to individual souls, and especially to the souls of men." The testimonial which was presented to him, signed by over three thousand six hundred men, contained this striking sentence: "It has been not only the charm of your speech which has drawn us to you, but, what is of course of far higher value—the depth of reality of your religious teaching, your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and your conspicuous ability to enter with sympathy into our thoughts and needs, and into all that which at this time makes faith and life difficult for men." Sympathy means insight and understanding of human needs. How divers these are! Each individual case must be studied separately and independently, with a view to finding out the temperament, habits, preferences and aptitudes of each one. The way to one will be prepared by a letter, to another by making a special appointment, to yet another by invitation to a meal or to a religious service. In these ways the point of contact is secured. All this means energy, toil and sacrifice; but surely it is worth while to have the privilege of witnessing the coming of the light of heaven into a soul and the expression of glow upon the countenance.

"The greatest obstacle to the progress of the

chariot wheels of the kingdom of God is the absolute indifference of the majority of the people in the churches." This from R. J. Patterson in his book, "The Happy Art of Catching Men," which is a thrilling record of work for temperance and clean manhood, applies to more than one form of Christian work. It is not an exaggerated statement when placed by the side of the reports of the Men and Religion Forward Movement, held a few years ago. Here are a few sentences that we do well to ponder. "We could save every individual in this land for Christ in two years' time if each of us would win but one a year. The number of church members who engage in Christian work of any kind is deplorably small." The summons is clear and imperative, and the call is loud and insistent for volunteer workers, who will give a sacrificial service and say, as did the Master of us all, "for their sakes I sanctify myself." All through the history of the church, the profitable contributions have come not from the wealthy few but from the many poor, whose gifts consisted not only of money but first of their own selves. Effective evangelism is individual evangelism, and as we realise the bigness of the issue, we shall see that "individual effort is imperative if collective success is to be obtained."

There are two words in the gospels which must be emphasised and reiterated. The first word is "Come," and find rest unto your souls. The

second word is "Go," and disciple others, so that they also may obtain this rest. "Come" is an invitation in the name of the gospel of blessed redemption. "Go" is a command for the sake of this same gospel, which offers its benefits to everyone, that all may find and receive the love and joy of God unto everlasting life. It has in mind the reconstruction of the life of the individual and also that of society, in accord with the principles and the spirit of Jesus. Where such an ideal and inspiration are in control, there will be produced a better type of nationalism and internationalism in all their many-sided bearings on education, commerce, and the general welfare of the whole race. Truly, "how great a forest is kindled by how small a fire!"

"Go, labour on; spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?"

CHAPTER EIGHT

"ALL AT IT AND ALWAYS AT IT."

THERE are two conceptions of the church. One regards it as an institution for its own members, a sort of a family institution. If it cares for its own and pays its bills and responds to sundry appeals for charity, it has done everything that might be expected of it. This form of self-respect and respectability is no doubt virtuous but it is inadequate. A church is expected to do much more than the fraternal orders, which at best are benevolent clubs. The other conception of the church is more in harmony with the spirit of Jesus, who taught that his followers should regard themselves as banded together for the benefit of the community in which they live, and also not forget their obligations to the large world, which is without God and without hope. This idea implies an excess of strength over and above what is needed for home consumption. It is true that charity begins at home, but it must not remain there. The church is a society of those who love Jesus Christ and are indebted to him for salvation. Its members regard themselves as a redeemed people, with the redemptive and evangelistic passion, impelling them to en-

gage in the work of making God real, and of giving the spiritual life the place of primacy in individual and social relationships.

When Jethro the priest of Midian visited Moses, the leader of the Exodus rehearsed to his father-in-law the wonderful works of Jehovah, wrought on behalf of the Israelites. The past was glorious with acts of redemption; but the future was going to be still more glorious. And so he invited Jethro to identify himself with this promising movement, saying to him: "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." When he hesitated, Moses appealed to him and said that if he did not care to enlist for his own sake, let him do it for Israel's sake. This won him. Can the church use this twofold appeal to-day? Most assuredly it can. Its record on the whole has been satisfactory throughout the centuries, but the work that it must undertake during the coming days is to be far greater, out of all proportion to anything that has been attempted and achieved since the day of Pentecost. And it needs strong characters to advance its interests. In what ways is the church to do good? By giving a sense of the reality of God, by making clear the spiritual values of life, by imparting courage in the face of heavy and depressing duties, by offering sympathy and support in a spirit of friendship. All who enter within its sacred circle should at once know that here is a company of men and women, whose

controlling purpose in life is to make their church a minister of grace, a distributor of kindness, a companion of the discouraged, an inspirer of the weak, a guide to the Saviour, and a never-failing refuge to all who desire God and redemption. Whether the promise of doing good is a matter of words and phrases, or whether it is a matter of deeds can soon be discovered by those who accept the invitation and enter within the portals of the church. If the church fails here, it is of doubtful advantage, whatever else it may do incidentally or in eleemosynary ways. The reason for this lies in the undisputed fact that the very genius of Christianity compels its adherents to become missionaries, and to witness to its benefits by word and deed. The gospel is essentially social and the spirit of obligation is one of its cardinal features. This truth has lately found convincing expression in the phrase "social evangelism," which addresses itself to the business, not of saving an occasional brand from the burning, but of transforming all the conditions which affect character and of helping in its freer and fuller development.

Christianity operates as the law of love, and the church is its living exponent. It enlists the services of every member by the constraint of this penetrating principle and lays upon each one the unescapable responsibility to be influenced by it and to commend it in most favourable ways to

every person. John Wesley's phrase, "All at it, and always at it," sententiously expresses a vital truth. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. There is a difference between clergy and laity only as to function. Every Christian has free access to the mercy-seat in the name of the great Mediator. Every Christian moreover can act as a priest to lead men to God. Thus John Nelson, mason and soldier, and John Hunt, ploughboy, were as much the priests of God as John Wesley. Saul of Tarsus enjoyed the priestly help of Ananias, Luther received that of Staupitz, Alexander Maclaren that of Benjamin Gregory, Moody that of his Sunday school teacher. This is a privilege within the reach of every Christian who should take advantage of it without professionalism or officialism, but in a kindly, cheerful and natural manner. We can readily imagine the power of a church whose membership is distinguished by such Christian calibre and character.

The question of spiritual atmosphere is momentous. Just as atmosphere is all-important in the world of nature and without it the farmer must plough in vain, and sow his seed for naught, so also the vital glow of spiritual atmosphere is indispensable in the church, and nothing else can take its place. Now, atmosphere is a matter of personality. It is created by men and women, who realise that, in Christ, they are members one

of another. People are at times heard to say that they are unable to go to church, as long as a particular person attends. We may resent this as an excuse or a presumptuous criticism, and tell the objectors that the presence of the persons to whom they take exception should not interfere with their enjoyment of the worship of God. But that does not remove the unfortunate situation. Worship is a social exercise and it thrives only in a warm atmosphere. The person criticised, if deserving of it, lowers the spiritual temperature, and in his company a disagreeable feeling creeps over one, like the slimy feeling that you have on a damp, dull day, with the chills running up and down your back. Just as you do not expect people in winter to come to church and be comfortable in a building that is not heated, so you must not expect people, especially outsiders, to attend church under circumstances which are both undesirable and intolerable.

The church must be the heartiest, the friendliest, the happiest place in the community. Friendship is what the world most needs, more especially in these days when hearts are being tried, when the vision is clouded, when a sense of loss and bereavement is common, when a spirit of foreboding meets us on every hand. Since the church is a brotherhood, the members are bound to one another by family ties. In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, which is the earliest New

Testament writing, we read that as soon as the people in this city became Christian believers, their relations to one another underwent a radical change; and this fact is assumed in the way the apostle addresses them. "Concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you; for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren." Peter exhorts in his first epistle: "Be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded." John is very decided in his first epistle: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." All these counsels are reflections of the teaching and practice of Jesus. In the upper room, among his parting words to them were these: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The reason why this spirit of love is so repeatedly exalted is because its practice is difficult and also distinctive of the true Christian. This is the secret of genuine fellowship, when souls hold commerce with each other and find both pleasure and profit in one another's company. How is it in actual life? Here is a testimony from a represen-

tative minister: "Many city churches are made up of people who do not even know one another, and who do not even want to know one another. Too many village churches are composed of people who know one another, and are sorry that they do. The weakness of the modern church lies in its dwarfed affections. The shame of present-day Christianity is its stunted sympathies. The church is rich in money, ideas, apparatus, numbers, but poor in love." From Doctor C. E. Jefferson in his volume, "The Building of the Church," let us turn to a representative layman, G. W. Pepper, in his Yale Lectures, "A Voice from the Crowd." He writes: "The man in the pulpit may do much to hasten a revival of the spirit of democracy within the church by reiterating our Lord's plain teachings upon this subject. But after all it rests with the man in the pew to eliminate snobbishness from congregational life and to make democracy once more a test of discipleship." A writer in a recent issue of "The Hibbert Journal" refers to conditions in Great Britain which are not unlike those in the United States. "Few of us, whether in church or chapel, are prepared to-day for the invasion of our churches by the 'poor' in any temper of mind. If they were animated by the inward urge of fresh energy and responsibility for the common good, would not such an invasion be even more appalling to us? Our churches stand very empty, but that is not our greatest mis-

fortune. It is that so many who are in them are keen to cry to the poor that they must not seek to better their conditions, that 'the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' while they eat and drink to their fill of the best every day, not only material food, but of the feast of beauty and of knowledge, and of all worldly delight, and will not face the fact that half the brethren of their own nation—the brethren for whom Christ died—are destroyed by their meat." The practice of hospitality is fast getting to be one of the lost arts of the church. This may be partly due to our manner of living in flats and apartments, which do not permit the social amenities of life. A more vital reason is that the right temper is absent. We do well to heed the counsel of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews: "Never forget to be hospitable, for by hospitality some have entertained angels unawares." Such a spirit is to be shown in our homes and in our churches with sanguine cordiality, and the probabilities are that we shall have experiences similar to that suggested by the sacred author. A failure of these winsome graces must of necessity compel the church to limp along under the severest limitations.

Our first business then is to Christianise the church, and make it more Christlike. A revival of the elemental virtues of the Christ life are im-

peratively desired. This would be the best sort of advertisement that a church can possibly have in a community. It is a farce to have the words, "Friendly Church," printed on the bulletin board outside, unless the reality is exemplified by those inside. One test of a church's usefulness is that of the opinion of the community concerning it. What do the non-church goers think of us? Or have we become such a negligible quantity that they do not think of us at all? Assuredly in every church there are faithful souls; but our purpose must be to increase this number and strengthen the leaven of loving-kindness. This work summons our best powers, to which everyone should consecrate ability and time. The smug self-satisfaction of the average church-member is pathetic. Not many have really grasped the meaning of discipleship, which means to take up the cross daily and to follow Christ. Most of them think that they have discharged their obligations when they attend the church service, provided nothing else interferes, and when they contribute to the support of the work, according to their inclinations. Bishop McDowell, in his Yale Lectures, "Good Ministers of Jesus Christ," laid bare the cause of our present malady in two forceful sentences. "The churches in any town are marked by the calmness, the self-restraint, the ordinariness of their consecration, the humdrum of their life, the lack of daring and

heroism in their adventure, and the occasionalness and conservatism of their positive devotion. One does not like to speak of the vast and paralysing unconsciousness of Jesus the Redeemer and Lord of life which pervades the churches that bear his name, the unconsciousness of him which permits people to go on day by day as if he were not." Let the faithful rouse themselves to a sense of their exacting responsibility and take no rest from prayer and from toil, until the church shall always and everywhere do the work of evangelism.

It is acknowledged by everyone that the minister must be a pastor and keep in close touch with his people and be quickly at their side in times of trouble. Doctor R. F. Horton in his moving "Autobiography," refers to this part of ministerial work in most impressive terms. "Often I have visited for four or five hours at a time, until I was quite spent, and my tongue could do no more. For twenty years I have kept up this practice. . . . For some unexplained reason this part of a minister's work is always laborious and uncongenial, and a thousand excuses are at hand for surrendering it. But facing it *invitâ Minervâ,* week by week for many years, I have come to regard it as the indispensable function of successful church work." But there is another side to this question which must be reckoned with in order that success may be complete. Pastoral work must also be undertaken by the members of the church,

and visits made in the homes, not only of those who are congenial, but also of those who are not quite so agreeable. If preachers find it to be arduous, the laity will not find it to be different, but it is the kind of work that is worthwhile and which has rich compensations. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" As Christians, it is our privilege to love the unlovely, and to do good to both the just and the unjust, for we pattern our lives after the higher standards of our Heavenly Father. Think of some of the benefits from such work. Some have got out of the way of coming to church. An informal visit from one or two church members will at least get them to feel that they are not forgotten, and it may rouse them to a sense of their negligence and win them back. Others are sick or in difficulty of one sort or another. It is expected that the minister will visit them, but it is not supposed that anyone else will do so. All the more reason why a call of sympathy and friendship will be welcome. Some feel that they are slighted or that they are not wanted, and that nobody cares for them, because perchance they are poor and cannot give much. Naturally they are sensitive and need attention. Then there are people who move from one town to another, who often lose interest in the church in their new place of residence. Their support might be enlisted by a friendly visit. Let

the stranger be made welcome into our church home, not only when he happens to attend but before he does so and afterwards. What a wonderful uplift will come into the lives of these folk by the quiet and interested notice which they receive. Be pleasant and do not act like Job's comforters. If you go to the sick, do not add to their troubles by discussing the ills of life and going into all manner of blood-curdling details. Always remember that you are a representative of Jesus Christ and his church. Have the evangelical temper and graces. Show the joy of the Christian life.

What a fine opportunity will thus be given you to speak a word for the church and also put in a plea for the Saviour, as the occasion may suggest and your common-sense may direct. How often we hear it said that the only time church people make visits is when they want cake or cash! This gives the impression that the church is a parasite living *on* others, when it really should be a friend living *for* others. In such a campaign of visitation it is generally best for two to go together, to guard against discouragements. This was the plan when the seventy were sent forth, and it had good results. In this way we can talk up the church, and it will become favourably known as friendly and sociable, made up of members who are actually interested in people for their own sake. Such a church can exercise an extensive

influence in the community. Its power will increase from more to more as its members are quickened by the fires of faith, the allegiance of loyalty and the enthusiasm of friendship, to minister to the needs of people. The demands for such service will multiply after the war, so that now is the time to get ready.

"O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Teach me thy secret; let me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way."

CHAPTER NINE

THE NEEDED REVIVAL

ANY reference to revivals generally brings to mind methods of appeal with their emotional accompaniments. We think of excitement and commotion and eager urgency, with exhibitions of hysteria, animated singing, vigorous exhortations, altar services, enquiry rooms, raising of hands for prayer, and other expressions which have been invariably associated with revival meetings. There also come to mind the inevitable reactions, after the physical, mental and spiritual strain and the tragic lapses of those who made the profession but had not the stability for fidelity. Such a season of summer heat is acceptable to many, who prefer its continuance the year round. They forget that just as a single season is not good for the world of nature, so also it is unfavourable to growth in the spiritual world. They seem to be like Peter who desired to remain on the Mount of Transfiguration, not realising that that was a special experience to fit him and the other disciples, as well as the Master, for the difficult duties at the foot of the mountain. The temporary upheaval of a revival is necessary at different periods. The church has repeatedly

fallen from the levels of spiritual experience and activity, which should be its normal condition. Such decadence and lethargy are due to many causes. Jesus anticipated these depressions, and earnestly called on his disciples to watch and pray, lest they yield to the temptations of "the world, the flesh and the devil." Failure to resist evil produces spiritual paralysis. Concentrated efforts must then be put forth to arrest the attention of people who have become religiously indifferent or have got into a rut, or are careless, that they might turn their thoughts towards a godly manner, living worthy of the gospel of redemption.

The influence of such revival activities is on record. In the eighteenth century, New England was the scene of a remarkable movement under the quiet but intense preaching of Jonathan Edwards, when vast multitudes were stirred and quickened and turned to God for mercy. So profound were the effects of this revival that the fire leaped across the ocean and roused Great Britain. John Wesley himself was deeply moved as he read the story of this extraordinary outburst of religious fervour and zeal. The evangelical revival in England was another notable movement, which followed on the heels of the work inaugurated by the Wesleys, Whitefield and their colleagues. Another of the historic revivals was in Kentucky, which swept men of the vilest character into the kingdom of God and cleansed social conditions

which were like the Augean stables. Yet another of these "times of refreshing" came with Moody and Sankey, who conducted great missions in the United States and Great Britain, leaving permanent results, not only in quickened lives, but in institutions like the Northfield schools and summer conferences, the Student Volunteer movement and other forms of Christian advance. There have been other revivals operating on a smaller scale, but their characteristics have been about the same as the wider-reaching manifestations of the divine Spirit. It is true that in many cases the appeal was to the emotions. The feelings of fear were roused by the emphatic declarations concerning death, judgment and punishment, and the insistent call to an immediate surrender to Christ, on peril of eternal disaster. The preaching of hell was not always of the gruesome type of Jonathan Edwards, although some modern evangelists would not hesitate to endorse the very words of the Northampton preacher: "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire abhors you. It is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell last night; and there is no other reason why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning." It is a strange sort of Christian who would rejoice with Edwards,

who said: "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever; it will give them a more lively relish."

To speak of hypnotic suggestion is not to belittle the revival but rather to seek a clearer understanding of it. Many have responded, under the spell of the atmosphere created by the revivalist, stirred by the decisions made, and the ecstatic jubilations of those who entered into peace and joy. The movement thereby gathered force by the multiplication of converts. In not a few cases, the physical excitement was neither ethical nor spiritual; and this explains why some lost their grip and fell into a worse state than they were before they came under the influence of the revival. What Principal George Adam Smith wrote of the work of Moody and Sankey, in his "Life of Henry Drummond," applies equally well to other protracted meetings. "This mission lifted thousands and tens of thousands of persons already trained in religion to a more clear and decided consciousness of their Christianity. It baptised crowds in the Spirit of Jesus and opened the eyes of innumerable men and women to the reality of the great facts of repentance and conversion, to the possibility of self-control and of peace by God's Spirit. We have admired the organisation of its converts. The young men who came under its influence are now in middle life, and to-day one can point to ministers in many

churches, and to laymen in charge of the municipal and social interests of almost every town, who were first roused to faith and first enlisted in the cause of God and of their fellow-men by the evangelists of 1873-75." On the other hand, there were some undesirable features. "The idealism of the movement, the emphasis which it laid on general principles and the speed with which multitudes were aroused to the conviction of these, conspired with the general excitement to destroy, in a certain class of minds, all sense for facts, and to corrupt their conscience for accuracy." One serious temptation of this sanguine evangelicalism was "to ignore all religious experience which lay outside the definite theology of the movement, and a stubborn refusal to recognise the manifest fruits of God's Spirit apart from the formulas and processes by which its converts had arrived at the truth. . . . The Spirit of our God works among us in many other ways than by 'revivals' and church services, and the evangelical movement which Messrs. Moody and Sankey did so much to reinforce has required every iota of the influence of science to teach it tolerance, accuracy and fearlessness of facts, and all the strength of the socialist movement to reawaken within it that sense of civic and economic duty by which the older evangelicalism of Wilberforce, Chalmers and Shaftesbury was so nobly distinguished." No one would call this an unfair criticism.

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All things considered, it must be acknowledged that this particular type of revival exercises a limited influence at the present day. Even the Welsh revival which was the most significant of recent years produced very disappointing results. In proportion to the efforts expended, with the extensive preliminary advertising and preparation, most of the modern evangelistic campaigns have produced very disappointing fruit. It is not that this method of conversion is discredited, so much as it is really ineffectual. Let us beware of the "wretched apotheosis of custom which has throttled the growth of Christ's Kingdom on earth, more than all unbelief put together."

> "New times demand new measures and new men,
> The world advances, and in time outgrows
> The laws that in our father's days were best;
> And doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
> Made wiser by the steady growth of truth."

At the risk of being misunderstood, it must be said that one of the most serious perils of the modern church comes from the abnormal invasion by evangelists. It is an appeal to the spectacular and the sensational, with methods that are not only artificial, but which savour far too much of cant and claptrap. An evangelist had been secured for a town. The usual preliminaries being over, the people began to pray, and at their meetings decisions for Christ commenced. When the

evangelist heard of it, he promptly wired the committee: "Hold the work in check till I come." If the efforts put forth by Christian people, prior to the coming of the evangelist, were given, under the leadership of their own pastors and infused by prayer, we believe that greater and more permanent results would be secured. The fact is that a revival cannot be worked up; it must be prayed down.

Let us however not conclude that the day of revivals is over. A different kind of spiritual awakening has also appeared at several periods in the church's history. It has not only been more comprehensive in its appeal but more constructive in its effects. It has not been marked by spasmodic undertakings, at high pressure, but it has gone forward according to the law of development by a series of consecutive and consistent efforts from day to day. Those who prefer the method of revolution with its violent disturbances may not be satisfied with the course of evolution. Both have nevertheless operated in the world, and the method of evolution has really achieved more than that of revolution. This is increasingly in evidence, even in these days of the War and of cataclysmic events. It moreover calls for definite conditions. We have seen in previous chapters that the church is at a low ebb spiritually. There is much movement without momentum. The practice of prayer is considered as of doubtful

value. The necessity for Christian unity is conceded by all but when it comes to a practical expression, so many difficulties raise their heads, inspired by bigotry, ecclesiasticism, social differences and the like. The day of genuine fellowship, determined by spiritual affinity, is thus indefinitely postponed. We have only to think of industrial and civic conditions to see what a veritable jungle of undergrowth must be cleared away before we can think of Christian fraternity in the all-round terms of Jesus. The miseries of the poor are intolerable and an affront to Christianity. The situation thus calls for radical changes and speedy redress in the matter of environment and other influences which tell on character and destiny. With the vision of a prophet, Bishop Franklin Spencer Spalding repeatedly emphasised the imperative demand for the recognition of this truth. He once said: "Behind all the movement for social uplift outside the religious organisations to-day, is a philosophy which is as yet unappropriated by the church, and yet which is, I believe, true. It is based upon the fact that environment has most to do with the making of the product, and that therefore the chief work of any organisation desiring success must be to create right conditions." Other leaders of thought, with equal force have declared the same truth and the phrase, "social evangelism," points to the direction in which the needed

revival of religion will find one of its manifestations.

Indeed, the very content of the Christian message must be reconsidered and restated, in view of the radical changes in the world of thought and life. "Invective and condemnation," says Henry Churchill King, "do not answer questions, nor does mere dogmatic repetition of old forms of statement. To keep now the same great Christian truths real to ourselves, and to be able to make them real to others, we must have some degree of restatement." We may protest as we please against the fantastic religious cults of our time, but we cannot deny that they came into existence and continue to flourish because the church had not kept pace with the changes created by science, psychology, philosophy and social ethics. The signal principle of development, known as the law of evolution, has revolutionised thought. Doctor Frank Ballard in "The Rational Way to Spiritual Revival," well says: "The plea for growth is the only true conservatism; because there is no other possible way of preserving what of value has been handed down to us." The truth of the Fatherhood of God has received much light from the science of comparative religion, which makes all the more noteworthy the teaching of Jesus. If we accept it fully and apply it honestly, our understanding of mankind will be radically changed, our attitude to our fellows will become

fraternal and the falsities and inconsistencies of many of our practices will be exposed. We will further see that sin is defiance of the law of love, under which all must live, who acknowledge the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Loyalty to the Master whom we serve will constrain us to uphold his leadership and control in every sphere of life. The simplicity of the Christianity of the New Testament is so refreshingly unlike the complications of theological and ecclesiastical Christianity, that we must often strain more than a point to see wherein the two are related. The essence of the Christian message really consists of a spiritual disposition, whose ardent devotion to God is equalled by a zealous service of man, in the name of the one Mediator and only Saviour Jesus Christ. The Christian life is a growth in grace and knowledge. An increase of the knowledge of God and of life will then deepen the evangelical experience and produce a character of developing Christlikeness, which will insistently and consistently make Christ the common centre of unity, the fruitful generator of vitality and the inspiring creator of personality.

The variety of Christian types is due to the differences of temperament. Some are prevailingly emotional, others are of the intellectual cast, while not a few are volitional. It is a commonplace of thought that no two people are alike, and

yet how often this elemental truth is overlooked when the appeal is made for Christian decision. "By their fruits they shall be known," constitutes the final test of worth. As long as it can be satisfied, it makes little difference whether the conversion was the result of emotionalism, rationalism or volitionalism. What matters it if one comes into the kingdom by a sudden conversion, or another enters by a gradual change? They are both the works of divine grace. If two liners enter port and are securely anchored, the one that had a tempestuous voyage may receive more sympathy but not any more approval than the other one which had a relatively calm voyage. The attempt to standardise the Christian life, as to its emotional manifestations, is to turn away from the essential to the incidental. Such a tendency might well expose one to the censure of Jesus, who spoke of those shortsighted folk, "who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel." There can never be any uniform Christian experience, any more than there is any depressing uniformity in nature. "The communion of saints is not merely the reproduction but the verification of experience." If we can be delivered "from the tyranny of the subjective and emotional," there will come to us a larger toleration of forms of religious life unlike ours. God who shows his versatility in the realm of nature is also gloriously versatile in the regions of grace. Let us then salute everyone

who has the marks of Christ, regardless of the place and the manner in which they received them. Such is the opulence of divine grace.

The results of the revival here considered are calculated to affect human life in its entirety. The Reformation protested, in the interest of individualism, against "the excessive solidarity characteristic of the medieval mind." The pendulum has since swung to the other extreme, and now we are called upon to accentuate the rights and duties of the individual in his social relations with other individuals. It is the summons to Christianise the social order, which means, in the words of Professor Rauschenbusch, "bringing it into harmony with the ethical convictions which we identify with Christ." It must begin with making more of the corporate life of each local church as a Christian fraternity, and of co-operation with other churches in the community, to make vivid and real the message and mission of Jesus Christ through his followers, who have consecrated themselves to the work of influencing and directing their several communities towards God and goodness, with all that it implies of justice, purity, honour, for the sake of humanitarianism. The processes by which these desirable blessings are to be reached will not be cataclysmic but constructive. They will work from within and not be operations from without. Less will be made of emotionalism and more of education, in the nur-

ture and culture of the virtues and graces which adorn character and beautify conduct. Spasmodic efforts need not therefore be discounted. There will continue to be a place for such activities, at least until the leaven of Christian truth has moulded society. We shall however rely far more earnestly on the attempts to awaken people to a sense of the realities, the vitalities, the rich privileges and the large responsibilities of devoted Christian living.

The more popular revival practices may doubtless stop the leakage in the church for a time; but they really evade the problem how to secure steady and continuous accessions of those who will not only enter the church but remain in it, to live "soberly, righteously and godly," and walk worthy of their vocation as fully-fledged Christians. But if we are to make headway in these healthy directions, there must be a quickening of faith in God the Holy Spirit, who speaks not with the accent of the first century or the eighteenth century, but of the twentieth century, urging us to face all the facts and make the conditions for the favourable coming of God to a world, distracted and desolated by war and by the godless passions of men. Let our preparation make us more sensitive to the leadings of the divine Spirit. We shall then be purged of prejudice, informed in mind as to our own times, enlightened in spirit as to the needs and strengthened to accept the challenge

and make it possible for Christ to have the pre-eminence. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all."

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

CHAPTER TEN

THE INDISPENSABLE BOOK

THE Bible appeals to so many sides of life that it can be studied in different ways. This library of sixty-six books is made up of every type of literature—history, biography, poetry, drama, letters, essays, proverbs, parables. It deals with as many subjects as are of interest to men—philosophy, psychology, sociology, prophecy, prayer, praise, as they touch on the supreme question of religion. The Bible is pre-eminently *the* book of religion. It is the record of the self-disclosure of God to man, of the response of man to God and of the resulting responsibility between men in their individual, social, national and international relationships. Think of the Bible as biography, and it excels in the analysis of character, taking note not only of "the greater men and women," but also of the lesser known, who belong to the rank and file. Think of it as history, and you find in its pages the gradual unfolding of the life of nations, particularly of one nation, in everything that concerns their best welfare. Think of it as a volume of devotion, and nowhere can you find more rapturous utterances of the human spirit, in its ascent towards

the mount of vision and triumph. The Bible has only recently been recognised as a missionary book, proclaiming the consolation of humanity, in notes of conviction and assurance. It is also the book of revivals and reformations, and a most profitable study of it can be made on this subject. Those interested in literature can obtain from the Bible far greater benefits than from the ancient classics, as Moulton has so conclusively shown in his suggestive volume, "The Literary Study of the Bible." This aspect of it can be supplemented with great advantage by a study of the influence of the Bible on literature, which impressively demonstrates that these writings of power have moulded the world's civilisation. This fact is finely discussed, with special reference to English-speaking peoples, in "The Bible in English Literature," by Doctor E. W. Work. Our study of the Bible, from whatever point of view, will be limited, unless we learn to regard it as the revelation of the purpose of God for the redemption of humanity. It is "the record of the pre-eminent meetings of God with men, and the direct reflections of the supreme revelation in Christ."

It would save us considerable difficulty if we regard this select literature from its own standpoint. Many of our troubles with the Bible are due to inadequate theories, which have not reckoned with all the facts. Thanks to the devoted labours of modern scholarship, we are learning

that questions of date, authorship and literary composition are incidental, and do not affect the vital truths. The critical study of the Bible does not lessen our appreciation and reverence of it, any more than botanical study would give us less pleasure and profit from flowers and plants. In fact, as a result of constructive Biblical criticism, we have a bigger and better Bible, because we have a clearer conception of the development of spiritual truth, from its dim beginnings in prehistoric times up to the perfect revelation in Jesus Christ. President H. C. King reminds us that, "every life of Christ worth reading, outside the gospels, has been written since 1835," when the fruits of critical scholarship began to be reaped. Its significance is that, "this generation has given to the life of Christ such direct, painstaking, historical study as the world has never before seen; and as a consequence we are able, to an extent not true of any preceding generation, to put the life of Christ into its real historical setting—political, intellectual, social, moral and religious —and so to understand more certainly the precise meaning of his acts and of his teaching." Another significant benefit is that since the divine revelation came through the human experience of elect souls, who had high commerce with God, the Bible must be judged in terms of life and not of logic. This means a great deal because religion is a personal matter; and the experience which

grows out of it, is rich and vigorous, in the measure of the direct fellowship with God.

The Bible then is a criterion from experience, giving us a standard by which to regulate our own lives. On the other hand, it is tested by human experience. We acknowledge its authority where it finds and satisfies the needs and desires of our heart. But of course, we remember that our best experience, at any stage, is limited, with vast possessions of spiritual blessing yet to be appropriated. We shall however find that at every advance the Bible maintains its leadership. We have found some parts of this precious volume more attractive because more helpful than other parts. Without hardly being aware of it, we accept one of the canons of criticism and treat the book with historical and spiritual perspective. For instance, literary experts first declare as to the distinction of Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Emerson, Browning and other leading lights of literature; but their word alone is not final. These writers have won their place by reason of intrinsic merit, which is recognised by the people at large. In the same way, the authority of the Bible is not finally determined by the findings of councils or the conclusions of scholars, but by the consensus of testimony of Christian men and women, who have used the book and find in their own experience that it has met their needs. In this sense, the Bible must be discovered by each

generation for itself. We must not depend on tradition although this voice of the past is not to be discarded. Just as second-hand religion is worthless, for purposes of testimony, so the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, on the strength of ecclesiastical verdicts, carries no weight, unless we have found out for ourselves that it is "a lamp unto our feet and light unto our path." It is the personal note that gives such force to the meditations and prayers of the Golden Psalm which has reference to the law. But what is true of the one hundred and nineteenth psalm as a testimony from experience is equally true of the whole Bible, whose real worth is endorsed by living witnesses. Well might Sabatier say: "It is the book above all books, light of the conscience, bread of the soul, leaven of all reforms. It is the lamp that hangs from the arched roof of the sanctuary, to give light to those who are seeking God. The destiny of holiness on earth is irrevocably linked with the destiny of the Bible."

The chief use of the Bible is for the culture of the religious life and the growth of character. Protestantism does not make as much of books of devotion as does Roman Catholicism. The reason is that the Bible is its pre-eminent book of devotion. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely

unto every good work." Such a service has been rendered by the Bible wherever its voice has been heard; but we are compelled to confess that it has often been muffled. Phillips Brooks correctly observed that, "religious people read thin, superficial books of religious sentiment, but do not meet face to face the strong, exacting, masculine pages of their Bibles." The most subtle dangers to which the church is exposed come from ignorance of the Bible. There is no other substitute as an aid to the best growth in character and influence. "I have been seriously perplexed to know," said Professor Huxley, "how the religious feeling which is the essential basis of conduct can be kept up without the use of the Bible." Doctor R. F. Horton once remarked, "It is the unhappy delusion of the church that it knows the teaching of Jesus." How we can call ourselves the disciples of the Master and yet have so confused an understanding of his truth, is not only marvellous but tragic. Herein is one reason why such a small percentage of Christians bear their testimony in personal work to lead others to Christ. If we are familiar with the redemptive purpose of God as interpreted by prophets and apostles, an increasing appreciation of its message will inevitably constrain us to share the blessings of salvation with others.

Wherever the Bible is read with enlightenment and earnestness, there cannot be damage from

sectarianisms and fanaticisms. All the fantastic and one-sided cults are based on erroneous conceptions of the method and character of revelation. History is treated as allegory, prophecy is confused with mantic prognostications, numbers are made to unravel unfathomable mysteries, apocalypse is regarded with gross literalness. Alas, the Bible is still read by those who wrest it to their own confusion and undoing. The Holy Spirit was not promised to give us the truth but to lead us into the truth. Such illumination does not dispense with the exercise of our own faculties, but makes it all the more obligatory that we use reason, conscience, heart and will in becoming directly and practically acquainted with the oracles of God. We hold, at least in theory, that an intelligent and regular study of the Book is vital to Christian life, but the fact is that the personal use of the Bible is far from common among us. We treat it with respect, and praise it, and present it as gifts bound in morocco with gilt edges. We give it a central place on the parlour table and even have a vase of flowers upon it. All this is ornamental but not useful, and nothing really worth while comes out of it. Fortunately, this is not the only sort of treatment which is meted out to the Book of life.

When the apostle Paul was driven out of Thessalonica, he went to the neighbouring town of Berea. Here he was given a cordial welcome.

The atmosphere was calm and judicious, free from ignorant antagonism. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed." The reference is to the word of the gospel, telling of Jesus the Messiah and of his work of redemption from sin. The spirit and attitude of these people are worthy of our imitation in the use of the Bible, which in a large sense is the Word of God. The Bereans were noble in character; they were serious, open-minded, unprejudiced, seeking the truth and ready to welcome it from whichever source it came. The fact that Paul and Silas were not ecclesiastically authorised made no difference to these enquirers. It was more important to give attention to what they said, especially as there was a note of conviction and confidence in their speech. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," is a good resolution with regard to the Bible, for it implies willingness to give time and thought to its study in all of its bearings. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians, he exhorted them to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Just as the Bereans gave themselves to examination of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, so should we treat the whole Bible. "God's message to the human soul," to quote the apt title of a discerning volume by

Doctor John Watson, challenges our most cordial consideration. Like the truth, it is not afraid of the light because it is not clad in the garments of darkness.

There are some necessary qualifications which are demanded of every Bible student. (a) Intelligence must be shown by the exercise of thought and the cultivation of memory. Intellectual effort of the best is none too good, to understand the mind of God which is expounded in the Bible, and which has been made accessible to us by the great scholars of the church. (b) Confidence must be given to the testimony of the Scriptures. Think of the noble company of men and women who were directed, comforted and inspired to faithful living, as they accepted the promises, heeded the precepts and followed the program for world redemption, found in the Bible. This book has never failed anyone, the leading scholars and historians being witness thereto; and their verdicts have been confirmed by the saints, who in a question like this always have the last word. (c) Perseverance is another quality to be cultivated. The Bible must be read daily. It is like the manna which had to be gathered day by day. It is like the mercies of God which are new every morning. Those who know, declare that the regular study of the Book brings spiritual replenishment and refreshment, unlike that obtained from any other book. (d) The whole Bible, if read at

the rate of a chapter a day, can be finished in two years and nine months. But we are not concerned in getting through the book so much as getting its ideas and ideals, in order that they might govern our lives. No haphazard reading will do this, but only a plan of study can secure the best results. There must be what Bishop Handley C. G. Moule called continuous "under-surface" study of the Bible, or what an ancient writer described as "burrowing in" the Word of God. Read it in sympathy with its high ideals and be inspired by them. Read it with reverence, intent on hearing the voice of God who speaks directly through its pages. Read it intensively. Take the gospel of Mark or the epistle of James and concentrate on it, till you understand its thought and are possessed by its spirit. Read it historically. If you select the first part of Isaiah, find out the social, political and religious conditions, with the help of such a volume like that by George Adam Smith in the Expositor's Bible series. You will then not only understand the burning message of the prophet but also understand how to apply it to your own life and times. If you select the epistle to the Galatians, learn of the temperament and circumstances of that people and the temptations before which they fell, as discussed by Adeney in the New-Century Bible series or by Dods in his "Introduction to the New Testament." You will then appreciate the vigorous appeals of

the apostle and know how to apply the teachings of this letter to the life of nominal, impulsive or steady Christians in the modern church. Of course, this method of study means work, but then no one has ever stumbled upon truth. The promise is "seek and ye shall find." This is true of discoverers like Columbus, Stanley and Nansen; of scientists like Faraday and Darwin; of naturalists like Audubon and Burroughs; of inventors like Edison and Marconi. It is also true of those who investigate in the spiritual realm, whether they are conspicuous Biblical scholars like A. B. Davidson, Frances Brown, S. R. Driver, J. H. Moulton or ordinary folk like the most of us. (e) To all these qualifications, we must add the practice of prayer. The Bible is a spiritual book and its teachings can be spiritually discerned only by those who have the devotional frame of mind to recognise the presence of God, not only in the pages of the Scriptures, but also in the life of every day. Such an approach to the Bible will lead to the discovery of untold riches, which are there to be mined by those who employ determination, diligence and devotion. (f) Let it be further said that how much to study or how to study largely depends on individual circumstances. You may observe the morning watch or the evening hour. It makes little difference whether you get your lunch at a buffet counter or seated at a table, so long as your hunger is satis-

fied. The same is true as to feeding your soul from day to day, which may be done on the train, in the boat or in the quiet of your home. Be sure, however, that you are really nourished.

A knowledge of the Bible is a wonderful help in times of need. When you are dismayed, think of Elijah's experience; when perplexed, recall the guidance given to Abraham; when answers to prayer are delayed, remind yourself of Jesus in Gethsemane or Paul supplicating for the removal of the thorn in the flesh; when religiously indifferent or at a low state of spiritual temperature, turn to the Psalms, or the gospels, or the book of Acts which tell of the enthusiasm of the early Christians in the face of harsh handicaps. One argument for the excellence of the Bible is that sermons on Shakespeare, Browning, Tennyson and current topics quickly run their course. But preaching which is based on the Bible never palls, and we never fail to rejoice in the unadulterated riches of the wisdom and love of God. In reviewing his ministry of thirty years, Doctor John Watson said that he found that while people appreciate literature in the preachers, they do not desire literature for the subjects of the pulpits; and that, "while they do not undervalue information on the Bible, they are ten thousand times more grateful for the inspiration of the book." Yet another argument is that every great revival has been preceded by a rediscovery of the Bible

and the placing of it in the hands of the laity. John Wycliffe with his popular translation of the Scriptures was a terror to corrupt ecclesiastics. John Huss made vigorous onslaughts on Romanism with the aid of the Bible. The edition of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus was a mighty weapon in the hands of Luther. The German translation by the great reformer himself helped considerably in the spread of the principles of Protestantism. Tyndale's version of the English Bible, followed by the King James version prepared the way for the evangelical revival. And last but not least, the work of our modern scholars has made it possible for us to see the manifold message of the Book, that it contains much more than a "few lines of evangelical doctrine and special providence"; and to believe with Pastor Robinson, when he declared to the Pilgrim Fathers, "I am convinced that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his holy Word." The revivals of religion of a former day wrought graciously among the common people. This is another way of saying with Rousseau: " 'Tis the people that compose the human race: what is not people is so small a concern that it is not worth the trouble of counting." John Morley quotes this sentence in his "Recollections," and adds, "Bright put the same civilising truth in homelier words when he reminded us that great halls and baronial castles do not make a

nation: the nation in every country dwells in the cottage." This is the cardinal teaching of democracy, so decidedly set forth in the Book of the evangel. Well might it be said that, "the Bible is the true panacea for a corrupt Christianity and the best bulwark of a holy religion." Become familiar with its message. Be faithful to its mandates. Bear its truths to others. Give it a full chance, and it shall yet win trophies for the Saviour and Lord of us all.

"Welcome dear book, soul's Joy and Food! The feast
Of Spirits: Heav'n extracted lyes in thee.
Thou art life's Charter, The Dove's spotless nest
Where souls are hatch'd unto Eternitie.

In thee the hidden stone, the Manna lies;
Thou art the great Elixir rare and Choice;
The Key that opens to all Mysteries,
The Word in Characters, God in the Voice."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EVANGELISTIC TEACHER

THE Sunday school is one of the greatest agencies of the church for the cultivation of the Christian life. Its work is done chiefly among those who normally are most receptive to the Christian appeal. About eighty per cent of those who make confession of Christ are under twenty-five years of age. Most of them are between the years of twelve and eighteen. Eighty per cent of those who have joined the church came from the Sunday school. But here is the arresting fact that it is only twenty per cent of the members of the school who have taken this stand. Many who drop out of the school belong to the critical period of life, between twelve and twenty-one, when life decisions made are most decisive, and when youth sorely needs counsel and guidance. Through failure of the Sunday school at this strategic place, many who reach the parting of the ways are lost to the church. If they are to be won back at all, it is through the intensive efforts of revival activity, with its good and evil associations. A business that regularly fails, where most profit is expected, is clearly con-

ducted on a wrong basis. This chronic leakage betrays lack of efficiency and economy.

There are many reasons for this alarming situation. The chief one is that the church has not yet grasped Christ's conception of childhood. He held that all children belong to God. Brushing aside the officious interference of his disciples on one occasion, he said: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." Bishop William Taylor was in accord with this sentiment of the Master, when he held up an African child before an American audience and said, "There are no heathen children." He meant that by nature none of them are aliens from God, and that it is we who by our ignorance and neglect alienate them from the heavenly Father. "The child should grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise." So wrote Horace Bushnell in his thought-provoking book, "Christian Nurture." His idea was that our purpose must be not to save children for God, but to keep them for God all their days. To be sure, we accept this theory but our practice contradicts it and so we belittle the importance of conserving child life and we wait until adult age before putting forth earnest efforts to win them for Christ. Children recognise Jesus as their Friend and receive him as such. The aim of religious education must then be to reconstruct the purpose of each child,

in harmony with his growing Christian intelligence and experience. This means that there will be a progressive renewing of the mind, a strengthening of the will and the forming of good habits. All this will react on the character and conduct of the pupil. This method further implies the cultivation of life relationships in the name of our Father and Saviour, whose purpose of redemptive love to all mankind is thus shared by us. This quiet way is doubtless not spectacular, and the achievements may not be chronicled to the satisfaction of ardent statisticians. But it is the final result that counts, and those with the long vision are the ultimate winners.

It is a commonplace that the leaders of to-morrow are in the schools to-day. If the better type of leadership is to be produced, it will depend on the instruction and influence there wielded. Who can say what far-reaching results will be produced by your scholars? When the Sunday school teacher led Robert Morrison to Christ, that obscure worker did not realise that the first step was taken to open China for the gospel. The teacher who led Moody to the Saviour had no idea of the vast harvest of souls which would be gathered by the evangelist. Well might we accept the statement in the book of Daniel, according to the marginal reading in the Revised Version: "The *teachers* shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteous-

ness as the stars for ever and ever." The original reference is to the pious, the martyrs and the genuine leaders of religion: but we can apply the sentiment with equal force to teachers in the Sunday school. The solution of our problem then virtually lies with the teacher, who has a rare opportunity in the service of the kingdom of God. What the school is depends in large measure on the character and qualifications of the teacher. He who has the requisite ability, which is the result of training, inevitably raises the standards of the school. One with purpose and program naturally brings others to share the vision of possibility and achievement. One who is consecrated to Christ and interested in the church will know both the subject of study and the object of instruction, which is the pupil. Such a person will follow the pedagogical method of precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little: and thereby find in the course of the years the structure of Christian character growing in balanced and beautiful proportions. Such a teacher is not an artisan or day labourer insisting on immediate pay and prompt returns; he is an artist with an informed and inspired imagination, who builds well to-day and can afford with patience to await the decision of the future. Good seed cannot fail of a harvest.

It is certainly a severe indictment on the inadequate religious education imparted by the church,

when a report like this can be made in a recent volume: "Religious Training in the School and Home," by Sneath, Hodges and Tweedy. "Many of our boys and girls grow up believing that religion has no intrinsic and necessary place in real life. Those who champion it are to their minds peculiar and erratic, not quite normal. The supernatural, to use that much abused word, becomes to them almost synonymous with the superstitious. Anything which is tinged with the mystical, which cannot be reasoned out logically and plotted geometrically and proved scientifically, is negligible if not queer. Religion may belong to sainthood, but they have no desire to be saints, at least the kind with which art and story have made them familiar. The life of Jesus is not synonymous with their ideal. In fact, the real Christ is to them practically unknown. Their conception of him is as unlike the original as the paintings of the early Italian school or the drawings in the catacombs. The Master appears in their eyes as the wan ascetic, the sentimental dreamer, the heavenly herald of an impractical code of ethics, and a teacher of a theological system which the world has outgrown. Naturally the church for them ceases to function. It is a social club, a purveyor of pious platitudes, apparently a comfort and a joy to the select few who are emotionally excitable and mentally incredulous. But for practical men of the world, for all thinkers fa-

miliar with science and philosophy, it may safely be allowed to pass out of their lives" (p. 30 f).

A great deal has to be unlearned before the real truth is taught. Now, the great business of the teacher is "to open the gates of life for the pupils." Everything must subserve this aim. "Whether we scan the heavens, penetrate the depths of the sea, pore over the pages of books or look into the minds and hearts of men, we are striving after an interpretation of life." This sentence from Pearson in his suggestive volume, "The Vitalised School," has reference to the public school teacher, but it is equally applicable to the Sunday school teacher, who must interpret life according to the highest and noblest ideal of Jesus. The teacher who has a trained mind, which is a discerning mind, will understand and appreciate the interests of each scholar. Here after all is the crux of the whole matter. The preacher who is more interested in his subject than in his object is failing in his mission. So also, the teacher who knows the lesson but does not know the pupil is playing a hit or miss game. One child is plastic, sanguine and quickly responsive: another is impulsive, changeable, and at times unreliable: yet another is phlegmatic, dull and finds it difficult to grasp the truth, but he is possessed of heroic and enduring qualities. These differences are determined not only by temperament but also by age, sex, education and up-

bringing. Each scholar must be treated separately, and we must not attempt to standardize the experience but should encourage the picturesque diversity, each according to his own order. "The more one thinks of it," said J. Brierley, "the more plainly it appears that in all regions of thought—religious, scientific, artistic, literary—the question of questions, the pivot on which everything turns, is personality. The personal life is the ultimate life, the personal interest the ultimate interest." This is true of youth as well as of adult life, for "the child is father of the man." We shall fail unless we reckon with all the facts. To put old heads on young shoulders is unnatural because contrary to the laws of growth and development. Where this is attempted the result is only a make-believe with damaging reactions on character. The child or the youth should therefore be taught only what will most directly benefit him and what will in turn become seed for the harvest of the future years.

The ultimate aim of religious teaching is to secure a favourable decision for Christ and the Christian life. The instruction is so framed and imparted that the scholar does not merely receive so much Bible information and become familiar with a set of doctrines about God. He has missed the mark if he does not come to know God the Father as revealed in Jesus Christ, whom he also

accepts as personal Saviour. Such knowledge with surrender enlightens the understanding, quickens the conscience and moves the will. The German schools are acknowledged to have the most rigid system of religious education, but it is too wooden. A great deal is made of creed and catechism, without any vital relation to character. It reminds one of the high school boy who was expelled and with a sense of unconscious irony said, "I got fired, but I got ninety-eight in ethics." There should be no gap between theory and practice in the matter of morals and religion. We must moreover distinguish between *instruction,* which draws out the best in a pupil, and *exhortation,* which expects the pupils to submit without any further discussion. The first is a form of expression, the second is one of repression. The first makes for development and initiative, the second for a static and passive type of life, which is always uncertain of itself and weakly dependent on others. The first encourages the cultivation of the Christian consciousness as the privilege of Protestantism, the second makes much of authority of the dogmatic order, and compels one to be guided by rules and not by principles.

The teaching which is most effective is continued after the class hour. What is done during the far too brief session of half an hour, more or less, oftener less, must be followed up with each individual. Such is the diffidence of the average

pupil that he will not make public confession in the presence of the class. One who has had considerable experience with young men says that nowadays they are "strangely and obstinately reticent as to their inner life." Imagine how embarrassing it would be to answer personal questions when taken off-guard. Respect for the personality of each pupil should show that such a method is not only untimely but really evades the issues. Where you desire to attract you alienate. It is in the privacy of heart-to-heart dealing that difficulties can be met, objections answered, and suggestions offered, which shall pave the way for the definite surrender to Christ, and for the open declaration. Here is where the teacher does the best work. If tactful and patient, sympathetic and earnest, if a personal interest is shown in everything relating to the pupil, the teacher will have the joy of guiding the young life to Christ and of helping him or her, to give practical expression to faith by joining the church.

Personal contact will introduce the teacher into the pupil's world. He will by all means become acquainted with the home life and secure the intelligent co-operation of the parents. Some may be hostile, either through lack of Christian concern or through inability to understand the significance of the young taking a stand for Christ. Those children who have Christian parents and who therefore have the training of a Christian home

would be more favourably disposed to make the open avowal of discipleship, since they have always been lovers of Jesus and never knew different. Others without this privilege must be dealt with according to their respective conditions. In every case, we must be frank and fair, and submit all the facts without evasion. This will enable us to avoid what Professor Coe, in "A Social Theory of Religious Education," calls "high pressure methods that ignore the laws of growth," which are " not only unnecessary but also injurious. They are injurious because the impression that they make upon children as to the nature of the Christian life is untrue. It is as untrue as would be the presentation to healthy children of a bottle of medicine to make them grow. The Christian life cannot be truthfully separated, with either child or adult, from the social issues that constitute the difference between the mind of Christ and the love of the world. To draw the child's mind away from these issues as they appear before him in his own inch-by-inch experience, and as the faithful Sunday school teacher has to recognise them, into a relatively abstract or sentimental contemplation of himself or of Christ, is to counteract not to supplement the sound work of religious education."

We should surely take advantage of the great days of the church year on account of their opportune messages. Their appeal would be all

the more conclusive because of the "educative process," which has prepared the scholar to enter upon his inheritance, with all the social responsibilities that accrue to it. Decision day need not be one special occasion in the year, when the regular lesson study must be suspended. It will be one of the usual and normal features of school life. "Every day should be a day of decision for every pupil according to his capacity for decision." The evangelistic teacher knows the evangel, which is Jesus Christ in all the wealth of his redeeming grace. He has the evangelistic spirit, which is love shown in patience, kindness and eagerness without discouragement or dismay. He further has the evangelistic purpose to win every scholar for Christ and to bring every one of them into personal fellowship with the Saviour. He finally follows the best evangelistic method, which is a friendly approach to each one with the goal ever in sight. The co-operation of other teachers likeminded will then help to make the atmosphere for the growth of every member of the school, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *

* I venture to refer to my book, "Personal Appeals to Sunday School Workers," for a fuller discussion of every important phase of this subject.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE PERSUASIVE PREACHER

THE triumph of democracy will make more of authority than could ever be possible under any theory of autocracy or oligarchy. But it is the authority of ability and merit and not the doubtful authority of privilege, influence and vested interests. This truth applies in a very marked way to the authority of the preacher. The credentials of apostolic succession, ecclesiastical sanction and churchly decorum are at best but incidental issues. As Principal Forsyth strongly puts it in his volume, "The Church and the Sacraments," "The church can appoint ministers, but the ministry, as an institution, is God's gift to his church, like the preacher's power. No power of men can make any man the oracle of God. 'There is no shekinah but by divine assignation.'" In the final analysis, therefore, the authority of the preacher is a question of personality. His vital and glowing experience of Christ the Redeemer and Lord enables him to exercise a creative ministry and he regards himself as a trustee of "the Word of New Creation." When he speaks from the inner sanctuary of experience, it is not only that of his own, but of the entire

company of Christian believers of all the centuries. Grace therefore adorns his message and it has irresistible sway. His speech is moreover marked by urgency, and he is keen on imparting what alone can bring spiritual relief, like "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." His business is not to defend Christ but to proclaim him in all the wondrous sufficiency of his power to save unto the uttermost. "As it now appears," wrote John Watson in reviewing his fruitful ministry at Sefton Park, Liverpool, "the chief effort of every sermon should be to unveil Christ, and the chief art of the preacher to conceal himself."

The great preachers of the church commanded a hearing because they dealt with the substantial facts of redemptive experience, and not with speculative inferences. Paul emphasized the personal note, when he spoke of "my gospel" (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; II Tim. 2:8). He did not imply that he had any exclusive monopoly, but that he had appropriated the gospel inheritance for himself and its virtue was a reality in his own life. "But though his experience was individual, it was not eccentric." He was certain that what had so adequately helped him was equally able to help all sinning and struggling humanity. Every preacher must have this assurance, without which he cannot have enthusiasm, energy and endurance. The greatness of preaching is not deter-

mined by the size of the field of labour but by the spirit of the labourer. The greatest preacher frequently had an audience of only one; but he stirred that single hearer with the joy of redemption, that like the seed sown on good ground the one was indefinitely multiplied and yielded an extensive harvest. Such a result was made possible because the preacher believed in his hearers. Oftentimes he quickened faith in those who did not believe in themselves, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, Zaccheus the publican and Mary Magdalene. John Morley confesses in his "Recollections," that a maxim which he repeated once a month or oftener was, "If you would love mankind, you must not expect too much from them." With all respect to this distinguished statesman, we must say that this is a form of cynicism, wholly different to the buoyant optimism of Jesus. He had full confidence in the generative and regenerative power of the gospel and was not disappointed.

> "Speak but the word! the Evangel shall awaken
> Life in the lost, the hero in the slave."

Like Jesus, every preacher must have a sane and balanced view of life. He should speak to life imperfect, of the life perfect; to life distracted and disconnected, of the life united and poised; to life self-centred, of the life God-possessed. The Master had an all-round program.

Over against social abuses, he placed social duties; and he balanced social privileges with social responsibilities. The ideal of the prophet concerning the Servant of Jehovah was heartily endorsed by Jesus, who completely realised it in his own ministry (Luke 4:16-30). The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of manifold obligation, which can be discharged only by those who have the experience of the beatitudes. The purpose of preaching is to persuade people to accept this noble ideal for their own practical guidance. Men were induced to take notice of what Jesus said because he gave them the impression that he knew with certainty what he was talking about. His whole soul went out to his hearers. They were swayed by his compassion which had pity and patience, by his courage with its vehemence of unction, by his gladness which had not even the tinge of melancholy. Those who heard him could not fail to learn that religion is both real and reasonable, and that its purpose is the redemption of all life and all of life, even of the "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues."

Since all knowledge is the province of the Christian preacher, he must never allow himself to be "smothered by parochialism." He is a messenger of Christ, whose dominion has no frontier, and whose empire must extend its sway over all the vocations and avocations of life. As one has said, "Christian progress, progress with Christ at

the head of it, has the promise of to-morrow and of the imaginable future." One who has such a conviction will give himself to the task of persuading men and women to decide promptly for Christ. He realises that many are not alive to their actual conditions and he therefore endeavours to awaken them out of sleep. The mother awakens her child in the morning in one way; the man is roused from sleep to go to work in a different way; those who are asleep in a house which is on fire are awakened in yet another way. So the preacher plays on every chord of the human heart, and as the necessities of each case may demand, he appeals to fear or ambition or self-respect or distress. This is not an easy business. It requires a full mind and a full heart. A knowledge of human nature which is replenished by the study of psychology will enable him to reckon with the varying moods, divers temperaments, changing emotions and complex experiences of human life. Such diversity is due to the endless flow of influences from friendship, prejudice, sentiment, tradition, custom, nationality and other circumstances of social and communal experience. Referring to Doctor Jowett of Balliol, Doctor Stopford Brooke wrote in his diary, "The blamelessness of his personal life kept him wholly ignorant of the desperateness of the temptations and trials of men, and he floundered when he got among them." This criticism

is a strong argument why the preacher must also be a pastor, keeping close to the people, if he would speak pointedly and persuasively to them. Indeed, preaching is a species of wrestling and he who would succeed must know the strength and weakness of his contestant. The man in the pulpit offers a proposition to the men in the pew. His concern is to secure their favourable acceptance of it, to the extent that they will change their method of living. What is said must therefore have compelling force, to constrain them to reconsider their ineffectual lives and submit decisively and uncompromisingly to Jesus Christ. As the preacher thus deals with the startling facts of sin, penitence and redemption, his hearers should be staggered rather than pleased, aroused rather than gratified, and then be induced in penitence to accept the sole solution for the removal of the discord and defeat within.

Evangelistic preaching of the "Come to Jesus" type is not enough. We must not only win men to Christ but show them how to be anchored in the faith. They must not only get right with God but keep right with him. We must not only have people but hold them. We should not only be solicitous of their salvation but persuade them to go on unto perfection. "It is easier to convert men than it is to educate them. The converts are many but the developed workers are few." One reason why so many lapse is "due to the fact that

their mental being has not been fully unified in the change." This omission can be rectified as the preacher discharges the function of a teacher and demonstrates how the right adjustments should be made. It was said of Jesus that he went about the synagogues of Galilee, "teaching and preaching" the gospel of the kingdom. His last commission was to make disciples of all the nations, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." The whole counsel of God must then be announced and enunciated, so that the entire circle of truth shall captivate every Christian, with the imperative of divine grace, instructing him, "to renounce irreligion and worldly passions and to live a life of self-mastery, of integrity and of piety in this present world." Our temptation has been to rely on a partial message, and consequently the citadel of truth has been endangered by the invasion of the votaries of fantastic and fatalistic cults. The great preachers of the church were generous in their proclamations, and, in the words of Doctor R. W. Dale, avoided "the danger of failing to give to any of the great doctrines of the Christian Faith an adequate place." The secret was that they breathed the spacious atmosphere of the Bible and expounded it with a wealth of learning and of spiritual insight, to gladden and strengthen their hearers with tidings of the unsearchable riches of Christ. "The best of books was in his

hand," wrote Bunyan of his ideal preacher, and those who have come nearest to this ideal have always been enlightened and fortified by the Book of God. So was it with Paul in the first century, with Maclaren in the last century and with every preacher of note and weight in all the centuries.

In these days when we think of the Scriptures not as a quarry of texts but as a literature of life, our use of the Bible should be more thorough than that of any previous generation. Where this is the case, an evangelistic-teaching ministry is exercised, and there is witnessed a steady stream of conversions with their marvel and joy, and a continuous flow of consistent confessions of Christ made by speech and in service. The testimony of Doctor R. F. Horton in his "Autobiography" is worth quoting on this point. He is referring to the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Lyndhurst Road Church, of which he is pastor. "There was one curious coincidence which came out in this review of the membership of the church; it made a deep impression on me. I had often bemoaned the fact that my work did not result in large harvests and impressive ingatherings. But, strange to say, we found that the number of members who had joined the church from the beginning represented exactly one for every Sunday service that had been held. The slow and steady work of my long years was permitted to produce just what was effected at Pente-

cost in one day. *Laus Deo!* Thirty years now to do what then required a few hours'' (p. 335).

It is largely due to our nervous desire for short cuts and quick results, that there is a growing tendency to hire some outsider to do the work of evangelism. The professional evangelist no doubt has his place, but it is a very limited and subordinate place. Those who look to him so eagerly, tacitly acknowledge their own incapacity or rather their negligence. The Protestant Church has surely fallen on evil times, when it thinks more of the spectacular appeals of the itinerant gospeler than of the all-round work of the settled ministry. It is really a reflection on the failure of the preacher *and* the people. This stigma cannot be removed by resorting to claptrap, with the inevitable displays of vulgar ribaldry and the obnoxious heckling over financial profits. The whole business is unethical, not to speak of it being tragically unspiritual. The popular evangelist invariably represents the reactionary and obscurantist forces in the church. He is out of sympathy with Christian scholarship, holding as he does to a theology which crudely misrepresents the true essence of Christianity, and its spiritual and social passion. He is more like the seller of patent medicines than like the duly qualified practitioner. At the close of his so-called revivalistic campaign, which has been characterised by pulpit rant and the unwarranted

vituperation of the church and the ministry, he leaves the community in a state of ecclesiastical and moral disruption, with problems made all the more complicated because of misplaced emphases and distorted views of duty and obligation. The scene is more like the wreckage from an explosion, which calls for the tedious removal of débris and years of reconstructive work, from the very foundations. How long are we going to permit such shameful displays?

It is unfortunate that the modern preacher is compelled to do so many things which really lie outside his particular sphere. How easy it is for the laity to shove things aside, on the assumption that these miscellaneous duties will be shouldered by the pastor! He thus becomes an advertising agent, concerned with bills and badges; a canvasser, taken up with surveys and census returns; and a financial manipulator, busied and wearied to make ends meet. In short, he is a "jack of all trades and master of none," a sort of an individual aptly described as a "pack horse," when he really should be a prophet of God, an evangelist of good tidings, a teacher of truth and a pastor of his people and of the community. No doubt this is partly due to the social conditions of our day. But it is nevertheless true, that so long as the minister is taken up with the opportunities of action, he will find it impossible, by the sheer weakness of the flesh, to face the diffi-

culties of thought, to solve the problems of life and to give himself to the supremely vital work of persuasive preaching, with independence of insight, vigour of vision and authority of conviction.

The darkness of temporising and compromising is however passing away, and the true light of the new day of the evangel's glory is already shining. There is coming a renaissance of the Christian pulpit, due in no small measure to the disillusions of the War. The outlook is therefore marked by the triumph of apostolic optimism. We shall again hear the gospel of redemption proclaimed with the fervour of Paul, the conviction of Athanasius, the eloquence of Chrysostum, the volcanic energy of Savonarola, the fearlessness of Knox, the courage of Luther, the independence of Calvin, the passion of Wesley, the scorching keenness of Edwards, the daring of Robertson, the charm of Punshon, the glow of Spurgeon, the rapture of Newman, the insight of Matheson, the splendour of Phillips Brooks, the joy of Moody, the tenderness of Beecher, the majesty of Dale, the grace of Maclaren. No negation of historian nor pessimism of philosopher nor materialism of scientist can ever withstand the joyful optimism of the evangelism of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Lord of life. Let the preacher devote himself to earnest prayer, arduous study, intense meditation and continuous shepherding, under the spell of the vision splen-

did, and his ministry shall make glad the City of our God. Great is thy office and opportunity, O preacher! Make full use of it as a worthy steward of the Gospel of grace and truth.

"'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
'Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene?'—
'Bravely!' said he; 'for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*'

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night! *
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

* "East London," by Matthew Arnold in *Poetical Works.* The Macmillan Company, New York.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN *

THINKING THROUGH

EVERY movement passes through three stages. It is first met with opposition, then with ridicule, and if it survives these two fires, it becomes established. So was it with Christianity in its early career. It was opposed in Jerusalem, it was ridiculed in Antioch, it was established in Rome. The successful issue depended on the ability of the leaders, who not only had vital convictions, but who proclaimed them, in spite of the forces which threatened to undermine and destroy them. If their convictions had been superficial, these men would not have been gripped by them nor would they have been able to grip the people. But they knew him whom they believed and they were persuaded, beyond cavil, rebuke or disparagement, that absolutely nothing could separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. They had thought through to their conclusions and were established on a firm foundation. No power could, therefore, move them. They had strong

* This chapter originally appeared in the *Methodist Review*, November, 1917. It is here introduced, with the kind permission of the editor, Dr. William V. Kelley, because it deals with some questions touching the larger mission of evangelism.

encouragement which was as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast. This was particularly true of the leaders of the Apostolic Church. In spite of imperfections, due to traditional influences, they had the progressive manner and the forward look. What saved them from wreckage on the rocks of traditionalism was the illumination of the Holy Spirit, whom they accepted as their constant and consistent guide into the larger areas of thought and life. Recall how Paul won the triumph for the cosmopolitan and democratic view of Christianity. The voice of opposition was stilled when the conservative leaders recognised that the apostle to the Gentiles had the guidance of the divine Spirit. They did not hesitate to accept conclusions which went counter to their accepted beliefs, because they were convinced that the new conclusions were nearer the whole truth than the old.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation did not have the same consistent attitude to truth. Conservatism and radicalism struggled for the mastery, but so great was the influence of mediævalism that the reformers were prevented from thinking through. In this case conservatism meant reaction. For instance, the principle of individual liberty in Christ, with its complementary principle of social obligation, was imperfectly expounded. The freedom of the Christian was modified by the dogma of sacerdotalism. The

priesthood of all believers was qualified by the separation into clergy and laity, with the implication of superior and inferior. The spirit of free enquiry and the rights of private judgment were limited by the distrust of reason. The liberation by the indwelling Holy Spirit was restricted by ecclesiastical pronouncements. The message of the open Book of God was kept within bounds by dogmatic interpretations. The authority of the Christian consciousness and the witness of the Spirit had the elements of spiritual vitality sapped out. The fact is that the Reformers were very much the children of their time. It was, therefore, inevitable that they were unable to pursue their conclusions to a consistent climax. They were held back by prepossessions and presuppositions, imposed upon them by Catholic scholasticism. This in turn was succeeded by Protestant scholasticism, which was no less dogmatic than its paralysing predecessor.

Much has happened since the date when Luther nailed his defiant theses. It ill becomes us at the present time to point out the manifest weaknesses of the greatest revival movement in the history of the church. It is not by criticising its defects that we can worthily commemorate this heroic protest on behalf of spiritual liberty in Christ and the nobler progress of humanity. It is rather by completing the program of Protestantism in the light of modern needs, that we shall prove our-

selves to be the devoted descendants of those brave souls, who, in the teeth of bitter opposition and unscrupulous persecution, remained loyal to the light as they saw it, and were faithful to the truth as they understood it. Our task is all the greater because of the innumerable changes wrought by science, travel, invention and the two ways of evolution and revolution in the social, economic, political and religious life of all peoples. The more pressing then is the call for a leadership to be characterised by "wisdom without egotism and truthfulness without cynicism." Just at this point we are confronted by one of the serious perils of our American life, due to slack discipline. It is well described by Professor Peabody, a true modern prophet, in "The Religious Education of an American Citizen": "A distinguished American has said that his country is alone in the world in its distrust of experts. One man's opinion is commonly thought to be as good as another's, if not better. A citizen may train himself laboriously for some form of public service, for diplomacy or legislation or the teaching of some branch of learning, and may find himself some day displaced by a wholly untrained competitor. When a candidate is proposed for office the first question asked concerning him is likely to be, not 'How adequately prepared is he for his task?' but 'Is he of our party; can he get the votes?' Inexperience may be a passport to pre-

ferment, and ignorance a title to self-respect." This means that leaders are not held in deserved honour. People insist on doing their own thinking. This is as it should be, provided they have the adequate data. But this, unfortunately, is not always the case, and we frequently find ourselves in the comic or rather tragic situation of the beggar on horseback and the prince walking. Another peril comes from the tendency to look for the safe man. This generally gives us the mediocre man who hesitates to say that his soul is his own, lest he offend vested interests and startle the prejudices of the "self-preoccupied business man." In these rushful times we have made the man of action our guide, while the man of thought is consigned to a place of secondary importance. This is akin to the inane talk about the "scholar in politics," as though our supremest need were the man of affairs with his nose to the grindstone, and not the man of vision with deep historic knowledge and world outlook. In urging the imperious necessity for the preparedness of the American mind, conscience and will, Doctor James A. Macdonald has pointed out that, "In the world conflict of ideas the college classrooms are our strategic heights. Hold them to-day, and the hinterland of the Vimy Ridge of Truth will be yours to-morrow." The New York *Tribune,* in an editorial on "The Mental Habits of Democracy," called attention to some of our conspicuous

failings: "Our national maxim has been, 'Get busy.' 'The hustler' has become our hero, with the result that few people, even leaders and moulders of public opinion, have had time for thinking. Scarcely anywhere in our blind milling around has there been an opportunity for the modern equivalent of that calm meditation which characterised the great minds of ancient and mediæval times." In such a "psychological climate" it is impossible to engage in work that is definitely constructive and which can bear fruit in all-round character and deeply moving conduct. The effect of all this is seen in the life and influence of the church.

One of the first questions which demands thorough thinking bears on church unity. The church is called upon to give an account of itself, not to enemies, but to friends. Those who are persuaded that the church offers the unique means of bringing blessing to mankind feel that its power is weakened by the blight of sectarianism. The outstanding principle of Protestantism is the freedom of the individual. The attempt to consecrate the intrinsic worth of personality has, however, resulted in an excessive individualistic emphasis, which has become an obsession in many deplorable instances. Room has assuredly been made for individual initiative, but the social boundaries within which this independence should be practised has often been overlooked. Consequently,

irresponsible persons have done violence to the social nexus which binds all believers together, and have neutralised the testimony of the church by the misery of divisions, which are as petty and provincial as they are selfish and self-willed. One of the inevitable but disastrous results has been the one-sided presentation of the whole counsel of God. "It is more or less of a scandal," says Bishop McDowell, "that we have preached the partial truth. And we are paying the penalty for it. If we do not do better, we must face the permanent alienation and loss of countless men from Christ's ranks. We cannot touch all life unless we use all of Christ's truth." People will give their adherence and confidence only to "that church, free or bond, which has most of the power, the future, the authority and the liberty which are in the Christ of the apostles and of the church." It can come about only by a union of forces, made possible by whole-souled sacrifice. As I have stated in "The Faith and the Fellowship": "This implies a spirit of enthusiasm which must be kindled at Calvary, if it is to be profitably effectual. With it must also go the conviction of the urgent need of the world for Christ, and of the spiritual waste of duplicating effort for the sake of maintaining an institution and not of redeeming society."

The purpose of the Protestant reformers was to supplant ecclesiastical authority by that of the

educated and enlightened Christian consciousness, which is a living thing, flexible and progressive, and marked by candour and integrity. But they became lost in a sea of fog and did not think out the implications of this freedom of the Spirit. So they compromised by placing reliance on the authority of the Bible. A book thus took the place of an organisation. The damage wrought was not due to the fact that the Book of God was made the court of appeal, but that its living message was qualified, modified and limited by a cast-iron theory of inspiration and revelation. These leaders failed to recognise that the Bible came out of experience and is the chronicle of the dealings of the living God with living men, concerned in concrete matters. It must not be regarded as a set of dogmatic propositions with a theological bias, but a recital of happenings with a religious interest. The researches of Biblical scholars have further been discredited because their work has tended to discount the traditional method of appeal to proof-texts, in favour of the rational appeal to the historical perspective, in the progressive unfolding of the will of God, "by divers portions and in divers manners." The final word is not to be had from quotations, but from the facts of life. A lamentable illustration of the confused thinking on this subject is given in "A Student in Arms," by Donald Hankey. He pays a high tribute to the unselfishness and charity of

the men in the trenches, but goes on to point out that the average Tommy, who before the war was a workingman, does not associate such virtues with Christianity. "He thinks that Christianity consists in believing the Bible and setting up to be better than your neighbours. By believing the Bible he means believing that Jonah was swallowed by the whale. By setting up to be better than your neighbours, he means not drinking, not swearing and preferably not smoking, being close-fisted with your money, avoiding the companionship of doubtful characters and refusing to acknowledge that such have any claim upon you" (page 109). What a parody on the Christianity of the New Testament! What a reflection on the religious education of the Sunday school and the pulpit! With such a premium on ignorance, we must not be surprised that church people have become so easy a prey to every fantastic cult, ingenious enough to wrest the Scriptures to its own advantage and to the religious undoing of its unwitting perverts. We must have consecrated courage to resist the temptation, common to both clergy and laity, "to substitute the cheap guess for the costly certainty, the easy evasion for the expensive solution of a hard problem." We must discountenance the holding of second-hand opinions which are surely not convictions. Such a practice, moreover, is not only a form of mental indolence; it is also an ethical lapse which

cannot fail to dull the conscience, to cloud the vision, to enervate the will and to spoil the character.

When the reformers abolished the confessional with its attendant evils, no provision was made for personal guidance in the religious life. To be sure, the pastoral office has always been supposed to discharge this function and there are pastors whose ministry in this direction has been beneficial. But as a matter of fact, this important phase of pastoral service is inadequately performed. It is arduous and exacting; it requires a familiarity with the best Christian thought and a sympathetic knowledge of human life in its multitudinous phases of need. One of the best parts of "A Spiritual Pilgrimage," by R. J. Campbell, is where he recounts his experience in dealing with enquirers at the City Temple, London. "It is wonderful," he writes, "how few people there are in the world to whom we can open our hearts freely, how few to whom we would dare to humiliate ourselves by admission of weakness and failure, how few to listen and understand" (page 159). Souls "in wandering mazes lost" querulously look around for help and not finding it go astray and make spiritual wreckage of their lives. Of course, some of the enquiries tend to casuistry and purposeless quibbling; but there are more cases than otherwise of "personal distress and melancholy despair," which must be given

direction. Some religious journals conduct a correspondence column, which is in the nature of a Protestant confessional. Its character can be judged from "Christian Counsel," by David Smith, and "Problems and Perplexities," by W. E. Orchard. These two volumes contain material that originally appeared in *The British Weekly* and *The Christian Commonwealth.* They are very suggestive to those who would fulfil their pastoral stewardship.

When we talk of relationships we are at once confronted by the modern problem of democracy. This ideal recognises the rights of the individual without overlooking his personal responsibilities. Faith in man is of the essence of a true democracy. It implies courage to accept the truth that every man is entitled to the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and, moreover, that it is incumbent on each one to help every other in a spirit of consideration and co-operation. It is not the policy of live-and-let-live, but the Christian policy of "live-and-help-live" that must govern all who espouse this ideal. "A democracy must be tempered," writes Croly, "first of all by and for action. Yet if it cannot combine thought with action, discussion with decision, criticism with resolution, a searching inquisitiveness with a tenacious faith, it cannot avoid going seriously astray. Democracy must risk its success on the integrity of human nature." Here is the crux of

the modern social question. It has to do not only with economic and social readjustments, but chiefly with a spiritual attitude of life. We must acknowledge that we *are* our brother's keeper, whatever his racial or religious traditions may be. In a discerning discussion of "The Principle of Nationalities," Israel Zangwill states that, "The brotherhood of the peoples is not barred by the plurality of patriotisms. It takes two men to make one brother. Internationalism, so far then from being the antithesis of Nationalism, actually requires nations to interrelate" (page 98). Those who desire to look further into this question will find food for thought in two volumes by Doctor James A. Macdonald. One is "Democracy and the Nations," the other consists of the Cole lectures on "The North American Idea." In the latter he declares: "Where slavery, serfdom, caste prevail, the foundation of democracy, the sense of personal right and obligation, the sense of the citizenship of all men, which allows to others the liberty we claim for ourselves, is never secured. Democracy is a process, not even to-day an accomplished fact, an evolution, not a fulfilment attained in any past stage of the world's history" (page 214). Some of the results achieved by the practice of the spirit of socialised democracy are given in a recent volume, entitled, "Sons of Italy," by Antonio Mangano, published by the Missionary Education Movement. Here then is the real basis

of the missionary enterprise. The purpose of Christian missions is to transform the individual as well as his surroundings. The spirit that impels us to undertake and support it is the love of man as man, in order that every man, woman and child might enjoy the higher benefits through Jesus Christ. "For our gospel is not the survival of the fit, but the revival of the unfit." So said C. Silvester Horne in his glowing book, "The Romance of Preaching." But if the converts are penned in by themselves and not permitted the freedom of fellowship, because forsooth they belong to a different nationality, then we practically reopen the controversy which was decidedly settled by the Apostolic Church, when Jew and Gentile were received on terms of absolute equality, and when the racial and social discriminations of an unregenerate world were wholly set aside. Any disparity that we accept is a virtual disparagement of the New Testament ideal and experience. By what right do we discriminate against those who enjoy the benefits of the life that is hid with Christ in God? Can it be that they are acceptable to the Lord Christ, but not to us? On whose authority do we establish a double standard which contradicts the very genius of Christianity? The melting pot has reached the boiling point. If the lid is not speedily removed, it will boil over and do damage. To use another figure suggested by Bishop Williams in his outspoken volume,

"The Christian Ministry and Social Problems," instead of perpetually mopping up the floor, let us turn off the spigot (page 66).

Is it not because we have turned away from the central issues of the Christian life that we feel ourselves spiritually powerless as churches? Principal Forsyth once put the case in his characteristic way when he said that the ancient prophet answered the summons with, "Here am I?" while his modern successor looks up with confusion and dismay, and asks, "Where am I?" The title of one of President H. C. King's most helpful books is "The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life." The phrase is significant. It is largely because we have faced our problems in a purely academic fashion and apart from life, theoretically and not with the scientific test of experiment and experience, that we find ourselves in so much of a dilemma. But the perplexity is itself a challenge to us to bend under the yoke in a spirit of heroic consecration. What Professor Peabody said of the social question applies to every question: "It cannot be fought through, or crowded through, or blundered through; it must be thought through." Thus only shall we be prepared for the demands which press upon us for attention and which summon us to action in the name of Christ, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

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